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THE

TSHI-SPEAKING PEOPLES

OF THE

GOLD COAST OF WEST AFRICA.

THEIR

RELIGION, MANNERS, CUSTOMS, LAWS, LANGUAGE, Etc.

BY

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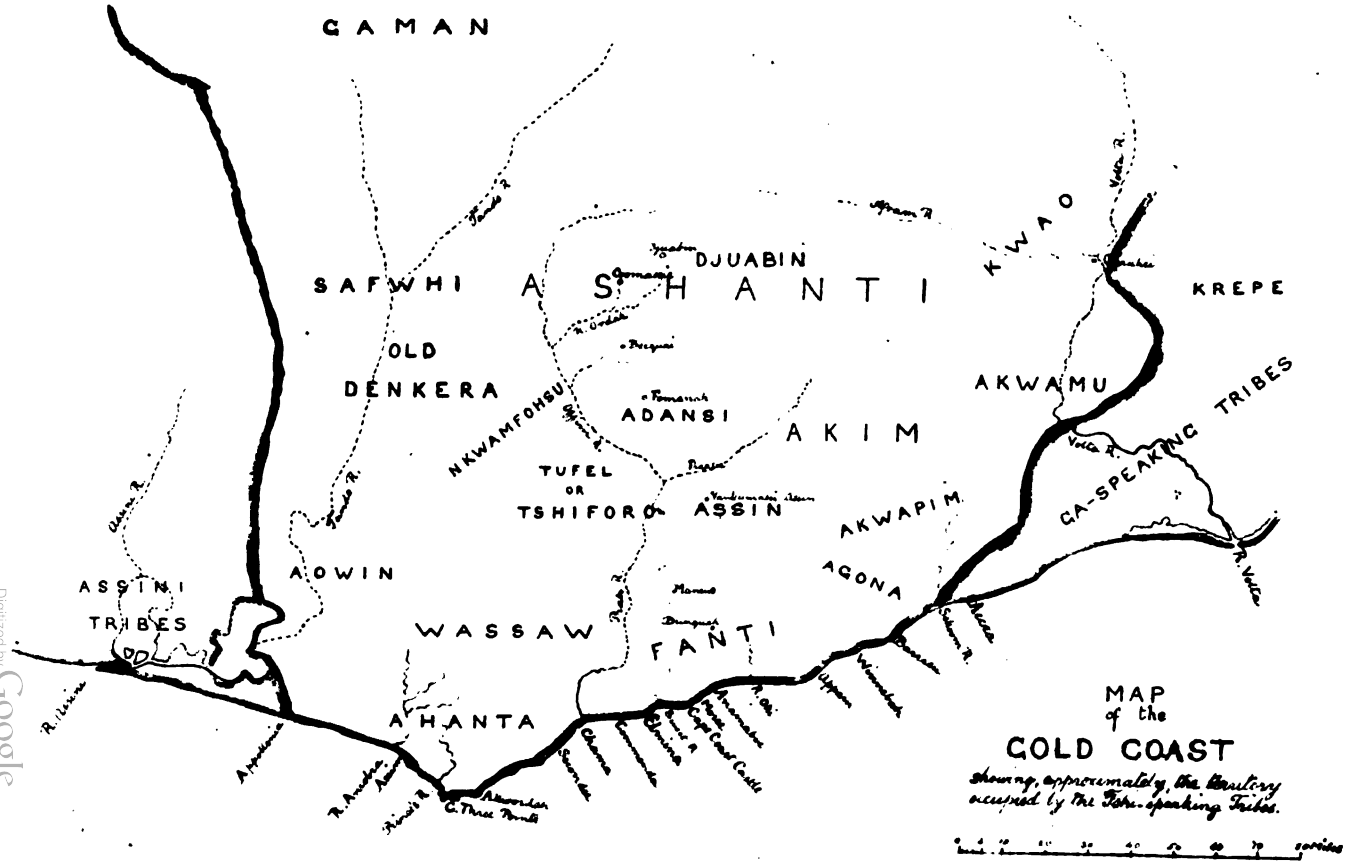

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THE TSHI-SPEAKING PEOPLES

OF THE

GOLD COAST OF WEST AFRICA.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY.

THE GOLD COAST consists of that portion of the West African coast comprised between the Assini River on the west and the Volta River on the east, and extends from about 3° 30′ west longitude to 30′ east longitude. The Gold Coast colony extends from the Assini River to the town of Flohow, some sixty miles to the east of the Volta River; but the territory beyond the latter is really a portion of the Slave Coast.

The greater portion of the Gold Coast consists of dense forest, which covers innumerable small hills, averaging from 100 to 300 feet in height. Inland, these hills take the shape of low ranges running more or less parallel with the general line of the coast, and which culminate in the well-known Adansi Hills. All this forest tract, locally termed "the bush," may, for all practicable purposes, be considered impenetrable.

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Both to the east and to the west of the Gold Coast the physical characteristics of the land change, and in place of forest-covered hills, one finds a series of lagoons running parallel with the sea-shore, and separated from the sea only by a sand ridge. This lagoon system extends a short distance into the Gold Coast itself, on the west to the Kinjabo Lagoon, and on the east to that which runs for several miles parallel to the coast to the west of the Volta. There can be but little doubt that in former days the lagoon system extended on this side as far as Accra; for the coast between that town and the Volta consists of rolling plains, free from forest or bush, and which, from the presence of large numbers of lagoon shells, appear to have been raised by a slow process of upheaval.

Now the whole of the forest tract is inhabited by tribes speaking dialects of one language, Tshi. This word, it may be remarked, is pronounced Tchwi, but as it has now for some years been written Tshi, it will perhaps be better to continue that mode of spelling. The Tshi-speaking tribes are essentially people of the forest, and, as far as can be ascertained, have never spread over the open country of the lagoon systems on the east and west of the Gold Coast. The open tract from Accra to the Volta is inhabited by a race of Dahoman stock speaking the Ga language, which has apparently migrated from the east; and the corresponding open tract from the Assini River to the Kinjabo Lagoon, has been similarly occupied by tribes from the west of Assini. Neither of these encroaching races has, however, trespassed upon the forested tracts peculiar to the Tshis.

The principal tribes which speak the Tshi language

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are as follows: The Ahantas, who extend from the Ancobra River to the mouth of the Prah, and the Fantis, who occupy the coast-line from the latter to Winnebah.* Inland, to the north of the former, are the Wassaws, and, to the north of these again, the Tshiforos, or Tufels, the Safwhis and Gamans. Inland, to the north of the Fantis, are the Assins, Adansis, and Ashantis. Behind the open country occupied by the Ga people from Accra to the Volta, forest again prevails, and this forested tract is also inhabited by Tshi-speaking tribes, namely, the Akims, Akwapims, and Akwamus. How far to the north of the Gamans and Ashantis the Tshi language prevails is at present unknown, but it is supposed to extend to the southern limit of the Houssa States lying to the south of the Niger. All the Tshi-speaking tribes are of the true negro type, as distinguished from the Negroids in the Mohammedan States to the north and the Congoese in the regions to the south; for it has now been generally accepted that the negro proper is only found in that tract comprised between Senegal and Gaboon Rivers.†

Throughout the whole of the vast tract of forest inhabited by the Tshi-speaking tribes, the natives reside in insignificant villages and hamlets, built in small clearings in the forest, between which communication is kept up by narrow forest-paths. With the exceptions of Coomassie and Djuabin, there is no purely native

* In the seventeenth century, Fanti, or Fantyn as it was then called, extended only from the Iron Hills to Salt Pond; and the territory now commonly known as Fanti then consisted of the states of Commani, Fetu, Saboe, and Fantyn, of which all but the latter have now disappeared.

† Latham, Waitz, Max Muller.

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assemblage of buildings worthy of the name of town. In such a country, where men reside in a number of small and semi-isolated communities, mere specks in a vast tract of impenetrable forest, ideas permeate but slowly; and notwithstanding an intercourse, on the part of the inhabitants of the sea-coast, with Europeans, which has existed for more than four hundred years, the Tshi-speaking tribes are now much in the same condition, both socially and morally, as they were at the time of the Portuguese discoveries.

That that condition is one low in the scale of civilisation cannot be denied. There are, indeed, many reasons why it should be so. Uncultured man is that which the circumstances in which he is placed make him, and it is upon external surroundings that his progress to civilisation in a great measure depends. He is either obstructed or assisted by the influences of surrounding Nature. Of such influences none is more important than that exercised by climate. A hot climate renders physical, and still more mental, labour difficult, and causes every effort to be regarded as an evil. In such climates, too, Nature is usually prolific; the necessity for manual labour scarcely exists, and, as a consequence, mental activity correspondingly languishes. The intense disinclination experienced by Europeans in the tropics to engage in any mental labour, is well known; and it is only by a great exertion of will that it can be combated. Even then, that requires a great mental effort, which, in a temperate climate, could be effected with but little trouble; for, together with a reluctance to engage in mental labour, a hot climate produces a corresponding inertness of

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thought and deficient energy of the will. If this be the case with Europeans, who have in their own country been accustomed to mental labour, aud who are, perhaps, only exposed to the enervating influences of tropical climates for comparatively short periods, what must be the effect produced upon races who have been subjected to these influences for ages, and who have never been taught to exercise or develop the mental capacity?

But in addition to these ordinary obstructing influences to progress, exercised by tropical climates generally, the West Coast of Africa possesses an extraordinary one, namely, a climate which is most inimical to man, and which is commonly believed to be in that respect the worst in the world. Although the Government European officials, both civil and military, remain but for a period of twelve months at a time on the Gold Coast, and then proceed to the United Kingdom for six months to recruit their health, the death-rate amongst them is abnormally high. Of other Europeans there are, with the exception of a few persons engaged in trade, none. There are no colonists, for no one could hope to live in such a climate. Unfortunately there are no statistics kept by the local government from which the death-rate might be computed. It came within my own experience, however, that in one year, and that a not unusually unhealthy one, in a town in which I resided, five deaths occurred and six persons had to be invalided to England out of a European population averaging twenty-four in number. And it must be remembered that in this population there were no aged or infirm persons, no women, and no children —all were men in the prime of life.

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All the Europeans reside in the towns on the sea-coast, where they hold but little intercourse with the natives. Once or twice a year a solitary European will be sent inland on a mission to some chief, or native state, and his duty is performed with the utmost expedition in order that he may the sooner return to the semi-civilisation of the coast towns, and the health-protecting sea-breeze. Such journeys are ordinarily only made along known routes, such as that from Cape Coast to Coomassie, and it is only the inhabitants of the hamlets on such routes that are at all brought into contact with Europeans, and then only for a few hours or minutes, in perhaps the course of a year. The remainder of the interior of the country is virtually a *terra incognita*, where the natives live undisturbed by any external influences.

Now the Negroes of the Gold Coast, though to a certain extent habituated through centuries of custom to the climatic conditions of West Africa, suffer therefrom in just the same way as do Europeans, though of course in a less degree; and they have acquired some forms of disease which appear peculiar to themselves and the climate. The climate is, in short, unhealthy for them also; and that an unhealthy climate enfeebles both mind and body is very generally acknowledged. Joachim Monteiro, indeed, in his work on "Angola and the River Congo," attributes the "rudimentary character of the Negro intellect" entirely to climate, and holds that countless ages of battling with malaria have produced, by a process of natural selection, a peculiar insensibility of both mind and body, which now admits of his inhabiting, with comparative impunity, regions which

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are deadly to the white and more highly organised races.

Professor Waitz holds very similar views. He says: "The comparatively low degree of civilisation among the Negroes may be chiefly explained by the relaxing effects of the climate, the geographical position of those regions, the few requirements as regards dress, food, and habitation, all of which Nature yields in abundance, and are obtainable by the simplest efforts. A high degree of intellectual development, deep thought, and a refined morality seem scarcely compatible with the mental prostration which life in the torrid zone produces in the European as well as in the native. Human art will hardly ever overcome the power of these natural obstructions."* And these opinions are supported by the rapid retrogression into barbarism of those inhabitants of the Liberian Republic, who are the descendants of freed American negroes; and by the fact that the expenditure of large sums of money by various philanthropic societies, and the exertions of missionaries and teachers of all denominations, have failed to do more than impose a mere veneer of civilisation upon the inhabitants of Sierra Leone, and then only upon a small minority, and this after a century of labour.

The heat of the climate of the Gold Coast then, which produces inertness of mind and body, its unhealthiness, which, besides enfeebling both these, prevents Europeans settling in the country, or even opening up the interior, so that the influence of a race more advanced in civilisation can only reach the tribes residing inland by a slow process of filtration through

* Introduction to "Anthropology."

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the inhabitants of the towns on the sea-coast; the dense forest, which renders communication difficult and retards the diffusion of new ideas; and a prolific Nature which produces food-stuffs in abundance; — these combined seem reasonably to account for the little progress made by the Tshi-speaking tribes in civilisation; and it is doubtful, if the Caucasian had been similarly placed, whether he would have been able, unaided, to reach that higher state of civilisation from which he now complacently regards the Negro.

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CHAPTER II.

RELIGIOUS BELIEFS.

With most races which are still relatively low in the scale of civilisation, it is found that their religion, that is, their ideas and beliefs upon what we term the supernatural, is frequently the main-spring of their actions. Religion is not with them, as with civilised peoples, a matter outside one's daily life; it is a subject which affects and influences in some degree almost every action of their daily life, and which is closely interwoven with all their habits, customs, and modes of thought. Even customs which are most barbarous and cruel, and which ultra-zealous professors of Christianity only seek to explain by assuming an innate viciousness and depravity in mankind, may, when traced to the fountain-head, be found to have arisen from the most pious motives, and to have been carried into effect through the most earnest religious convictions. Thus, in treating of any so-called savage race, it seems the better plan, before giving any description of the manners, customs, and mode of life of the people of that race, to inquire into and endeavour to fathom their religious ideas and forms of worship, by which nearly all the former are influenced and modified.

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In this way many strange customs, which would other wise appear inexplicable, become comprehensible, and, viewed by the light of their religious belief, the interpretation of their manner of life is feasible. For this reason I propose commencing this account of the Tshi-speaking peoples of the Gold Coast, with a description of their religious beliefs and forms of worship.

By the words "religion" and "religious beliefs," I do not mean the belief in a Supreme Being who controls the universe, which belief is indeed limited to but a small proportion of the human family; but a belief in the existence of beings, ordinarily invisible, upon whose favour or indifference man and his fate depend. In this form religion is commonly found amongst savage tribes, and the less developed is the intelligence of the people, the more crude and the more absurd appear their religious notions; for it is not the religion that is the cause of the civilisation, but rather the higher stage of civilisation that gives birth to higher religious ideas.

With people in the condition in which the natives of the Gold Coast now are, religion is not in any way allied with moral ideas, whose source is indeed essentially distinct, although the two become associated when man attains a higher degree of civilisation. Sin, I use the word in the sense of an offence committed against a god, is amongst the natives of the Gold Coast, limited to—first, insults offered to the gods; secondly, neglect of the gods. Murder, theft, and all offences against the person or against property, are matters in which the gods have no immediate concern, and in which they take no interest, except in the case when, bribed by a valuable offering, they take up the quarrel in the interests of some faith-

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ful worshipper. The gods of the Gold Coast are jealous gods, jealous of their dignity, jealous of the adulation and offerings paid to them; and there is nothing they resent so much as any slight, whether intentional or accidental, which may be offered them. Such a sin can only be expiated, if at all, by the most abject humiliation, and the most costly sacrifices. The most atrocious crimes, committed as between man and man, the gods can view with equanimity. These are man's concerns, and must be rectified or punished by man. But, like the gods of people much farther advanced in civilisation, there is nothing that offends them so deeply as to ignore them, or question their power, or laugh at them. In short, the people of the Gold Coast, being low in the stage of civilisation, have imagined gods with equally low mental characteristics; and uncivilised men, and indeed a great many civilised, will forgive any injuries rather than those which touch their self-esteem.

Whether, as held by Mr. Herbert Spencer and Sir John Lubbock, the belief in the existence of invisible beings or powers originated from the condition of man during sleep, and especially from dreams; or whether primitive man, finding his plans continually frustrated by natural causes, his wishes unfulfilled, and himself overtaken by misery or misfortune, spiritualised nature, and in imagination peopled the earth with malignant beings, whose pleasure it was to thwart and destroy him, need not here be discussed; but, whatever might have been the cause of the belief in such beings, the fact remains that we find almost all uncultivated peoples in this condition—that they consider all natural phenomena whose power they experience, as beings who act and who

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possess the power of volition. The belief in such beings, whom we may for convenience sake term "spirits," is extended to all Nature. Any hindrance to the attainment of his objects which uncivilised man may experience, is attributed to these, usually invisible, agents, whom he necessarily can only imagine as analogous to himself.

On the Gold Coast the majority of these spirits are malignant, and every misfortune is ascribed to their action. I believe that originally all were conceived as malignant, and that the indifference, or the beneficence (when propitiated by sacrifice and flattery), which are now believed to be characteristics of some of these beings, are later modifications of the original idea. Each town, village, or district has its own local spirits, or gods, the lords of the rivers and streams, the hills and the valleys, the rocks and the forests. These spirits throughout present the same general characteristics, but with slight local modifications. Each has his own special name. They are ordinarily supposed to be of human shape; some are white in colour, and some black; and priests and priestesses occasionally report that they have seen them. Some are male, and some female.

As with the land, so it is also with the sea, which has its own local spirits. As a rule, every portion of the shore where the surf breaks unusually heavily, or where the presence of rocks causes the water to become broken, and, in consequence, dangerous for canoes, has its local spirit. The *raison d'être* of these imaginary beings is hence, at first sight, more easy of comprehension than is that of those of the land. In the roar and dash of the surf there is a sense of motion and power, and the upsetting of canoes and the drowning of fishermen or

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bathers is taken as proof of the existence of the malignant spirits. To the uncivilised man there are no such deaths as those we term natural or accidental. All deaths are attributed directly to the actions of men or to the invisible powers. If a man be shot or his skull be fractured by another man, the cause of death appears to the uncivilised man obvious. Such and such an injury has been inflicted by So-and-so, and experience, either personal or derived, has shown him that death results from such injuries. But should a man be drowned, be crushed by a falling tree in the forest, or be killed by lightning, such an occurrence would not be considered an accident; and a man who met his death in one of these modes would be believed to have perished through the deliberate act of a malignant being And such, to us, accidental deaths, prove to the uncivilised man both the existence and the malignancy of these beings. A man is drowned. Who has killed him? So-and-so, a local spirit of the sea or river, has dragged him down. In fact, on the Gold Coast at the present day when a man is drowned, his comrades say: "A——" (the local deity of the portion of the sea or river where the accident occurred) "*w'arfah m'.*" "A—— has taken him."

Thus far for violent and sudden deaths; but the same belief is held with regard to deaths which are really due to disease or old age. These are likewise attributed to the action of the invisible powers directly, or to witchcraft, that is to say, to the indirect action of the same powers; for it is from them that wizards and witches obtain assistance and mysterious knowledge. Savages are necessarily ignorant both of anatomy and

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of the processes by which life is maintained, and casting about for a cause to which to attribute death from disease, they refer it to a malignant being. Thus sickness is never regarded as the effect of natural causes, as the result of neglect or exposure, of an insufficiency of wholesome food, or of neglected sanitation; it is always believed to be caused by a malignant spirit, either acting directly or through an agent.

As the local deities of the sea owe the belief in their existence to catastrophes which have in past times occurred in the sea (as will be exemplified further on, particularly by the case of the Akum-brohfo of Akwordah), so, too, we may infer that each of the local deities of the land owes the belief in its existence to some fatal accident which has taken place at the spot where the spirit is now believed to reside. In some cases the accident may be so remote that not even a tradition of it remains, though the belief in the local spirit, once found, has been preserved by transmission from generation to generation. Perhaps in such cases, especially in districts on the sea-coast, where for some four hundred years the natives have been in contact with races professing Christianity, and where the (to the natives) new idea of the possibility of the existence of deities who not only were not malevolent, but were even benignant, must in consequence, at all events to some small extent, have permeated the masses and affected in some degree native thought, the spirit has come to be no longer regarded as malignant, but perhaps as indifferent, or even as beneficent, if propitiated. In other cases, on the other hand, the recurrence of accidents near the same spot at greater or less intervals of time,

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would keep alive the belief in the malignancy of the local god. Instances both of this and of the former will be given later on.

When man has arrived at the belief that his fate is entirely dependent upon the goodwill of mysterious, malicious beings, he naturally strives to attain that goodwill. To do this, he pays them homage and flatters them. Then occurs the thought of making sacrifices. He deprives himself of something, usually food, and sacrifices it to a god, who is thus doubly gratified—namely, by the offering itself; and also, since he is essentially malignant, by the privation suffered by the sacrificer. Then persons are either set apart for the service of the gods, to watch over the offerings and the particular spot ordinarily inhabited by each god; or some men, more fortunate or more cunning than their neighbours, acquire a local celebrity by their success in predicting or interpreting the wishes and intentions of the gods. Thus arises a priesthood, and the interest of this class soon becomes irrevocably bound up with the maintenance of the *culte*.

Thus the belief in the imaginary beings of the Gold Coast is steadfastly kept up by the priests and priestesses—for their own ends, for the maintenance of their power over the people, and for the maintenance of their avocation. Were there no local deities to be appeased and mollified, or propitiated, a most lucrative portion of their business would be at an end. Consequently they frequently talk about them, and profess to have met them. They introduce their imaginary meetings with the local gods, artfully and without apparent design, into general conversations; and speak

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of such meetings in a casual manner, as if they were ordinary occurrences which need excite no wonder. If a man be asked to describe a local god, he will at once do so; but when questioned as to whether he has seen it himself, he will reply in the negative; and when the investigation is pushed further, it almost invariably transpires that he derives his information from a priest or priestess.

"Have you seen Fohsu?"

"No."

"How then do you know what she is like?"

"Oh! So-and-so" (a priest or priestess) "used to talk about her."

Of course the timid, and persons of a nervous temperament, sometimes think that they have seen spirits, particularly by night. Indeed, as they are superstitious and credulous to the last degree, and firmly believe in the existence of such beings, it would be strange if they did not sometimes deceive themselves; just as in civilised countries a secret belief in the existence of ghosts is always necessary to enable a person to fancy he has seen an apparition. These stories of fancied meetings with the spirits are repeated to their neighbours, and such tales, retailed in every direction, help to keep alive the belief in the imaginary beings.

It is obvious that such a religious belief as this, which attributes everything that appears unintelligible to the power of invisible beings, and which makes man's well-being dependent upon the uncertain dispositions of those beings, instead of upon his industry and exertions, must necessarily obstruct both mental activity and civilisation. Inquiry is cut short, and a feeling of in-

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security is engendered. Since every misfortune proceeds from, and can only be averted by, the gods, nothing remains for man to do but to propitiate them. Worship is simply the result of fear, or of the hope of obtaining some direct advantage or protection. Under such a religious belief as that which prevails on the Gold Coast, the necessity of inquiring into the origin of pestilence and disease never occurs to man, for he can come to no conclusion except that they are scourges inflicted by malignant beings. Such ideas live long, even after the *culte* under which they have originated and flourished, has disappeared; thus we find, even at the present day, persons in Europe who will attribute epidemic outbreaks to the direct interference of an invisible being, rather than to the neglect of sanitary laws. But besides the ordinary obstructing influences to progress exercised by most religions, and especially by those of the lower races, the religion of the peoples of the Gold Coast, by its direct authorisation of human sacrifices and ordeals, and the consequent frequent spectacle of scenes of bloodshed and cruelty, has produced amongst the natives a want of human sympathy, and a callousness at human suffering, which is shocking to contemplate.

Among the Tshi-speaking tribes, deities may be grouped under four heads.

(1). Those generally worshipped by an entire tribe, or by one or more tribes. These, which may be termed General Deities, are few in number.

(2). Those worshipped by the inhabitants of certain towns, localities, or districts. These are the Local Deities, the spirits of the neighbouring rivers, forests, hills, and sea. They are very numerous, every locality having

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several. The general name for these deities is *Bohsŭm*.*

(3). Those worshipped by smaller sections of the community, such as by special families, or town companies. Each family or town company has its own deity of this class, who gives protection in return for worship and sacrifice.

(4). Those worshipped each by one individual. These are, of course, the Tutelary Deities of individuals. The general name for them is *Suhman*.

The deities of Class 2 are believed to have been appointed by those of Class 1; those of Class 3 are and have been appointed by the deities of Class 2, through the agency of the priesthood. Those of Class 4 are obtained by individuals for themselves, in a variety of ways which will be described later on.

Deities of Class 1 are considered too distant or too indifferent to interfere ordinarily in human affairs. Those of Class 2 appear originally to have been all malignant. The majority are still so considered; but in some cases, especially in the coast towns, the idea has become modified, and some are now regarded as benignant, if properly propitiated. The deities of this class I take to be the most original conceptions of the Negro; those of Class 1, having, I think, been subsequently raised from amongst them to a higher grade. The deities of Classes 3 and 4 are clearly the product and result of priestcraft.

* This word appears to be compounded of *Boh* (to form or make) and *essŭn* (mishap, calamity), the whole meaning "Producer of Calamities." If this be correct, it affords a curious illustration of the native views concerning their gods. It is worthy of note that *Bohsufo* means "a mischievous person."

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The deities are not, properly speaking, what we should term supernatural agents. The conception of a deity formed by uncivilised races is very different from that formed by higher races. A deity is with them invariably a part of Nature. It is superhuman, but not supernatural. The conception of the latter belongs to a far higher stage of mental development than that which the Tshi-speaking peoples have attained.

The following words are commonly used generically in speaking of these superhuman agents.

(1). *Sunsum*, "spirit." A word which also means "shadow."

(2). *Srahman*, "ghost," or "goblin." This word also means "lightning."

(3). *Abonsŭm*. This is the general term for a very malignant spirit. It also means "witchcraft," "magic," etc.

(4). *Bohsŭm*. Besides being used, as already stated, in connection with the deities of Class 3, this word also means a "a lake," and "the moon," and naturally, from the latter, has come to mean "month." It also appears to have an adjectival meaning in the sense of occult, mystic, or sacred. Thus *Bohsŭm Prah*, "Sacred Prah;" *Bohsŭm eppoh*, "The mysterious sea."

Before concluding this chapter, I propose making the following quotation from Waitz's "Introduction to Anthropology" (p. 368), which appears very appropriate. He says: "We have seen that the original form of all religion is a raw, unsystematic polytheism. Man in a state of Nature finds himself surrounded by threatening dangers and actual miseries, which he attributes to unfriendly powers who appear to him to

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be constantly on the alert to impede his progress. That, on the contrary, which regularly and periodically recurs, passes by him unheeded, because, being expected and anticipated, he is not obstructed in his path. He looks thus at Nature as a world of spirits; but the notions he conceives as to the nature of these inimical powers depend partly on surrounding Nature and the vividness of his imagination, and partly on the special occasions which excite his affections and passions. . . . Religions of this kind are characterised by their discrepancies. Every one worships either what he fears the most, or from which he expects the greatest aid in need. There are few general, but many local and individual, objects of veneration, and even the general objects of worship possess at different times a greater or less importance for their worshippers. Faith as yet lays no claim to universal assent; there is an absolute toleration, and it is considered quite natural that other people should have other gods. The endeavour to force upon others his own views, whether concerning religious or other subjects, is altogether foreign to the primitive man, who so highly values personal independence."

It was not until I had nearly completed the collection and arrangement of materials for this work that I met with the above passage, and I could not but be struck with the fact of how exactly it described the religious ideas and feelings of the Tshi-speaking tribes. There are few general, but many local and individual, objects of veneration. The local are, almost invariably, deified inimical powers in Nature; and all—general, local, and individual—are worshipped either because they are feared, or because protection or aid may thus

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be obtained from them. "That which regularly and periodically recurs, passes by unheeded, because, being expected and anticipated, he is not obstructed in his path." Hence the rising and setting of the sun and moon, the periodical recurrence of the latter, the succession of day by night, etc., have excited no speculation in the mind of the Negro of the Gold Coast. None of the heavenly bodies are worshipped; they are too distant to be selected as objects of veneration; and the very regularity of their appearance impresses him less than the evidences of power and motion exhibited by rivers, the sea, storms, landslips, etc. All the deities are of the earth, and their worship is born of fear of some possible ill, or of a desire for some possible good. No man endeavours to force upon another his own views, and it is to the Negro quite natural that different people should have different gods. For a man living in one district to worship the local gods of a distant district would be, to the Negro mind, an act of superfluity, a mere waste of time. The gods of the distant district would be too remote to trouble themselves about him and his affairs; while, in his own district, there would be, immediately at hand, gods who possessed the power to injure him, and whose propitiation by worship and sacrifice would be a matter of urgency. Consequently in each district the inhabitants worship the gods of the immediate locality, and no man troubles about those at a distance, unless his affairs take him within their sphere.

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CHAPTER III.

GENERAL DEITIES.

At the time of the advent of Europeans on the Gold Coast, that is to say, about the middle of the fifteenth century, there appear to have been two deities generally worshipped, one by the southern tribes and the other by the northern. Their names are—for they are still worshipped—Bobowissi and Tando.

Bobowissi's place of abode was, and is, the conical hill near Winnebah, known as Winnebah Hill, or the Devil's Hill. The latter title is derived from the Portuguese, who termed the hill Monte de Diablo; "devil" being in those days a common designation for the gods worshipped by peoples other than Christians. Bobowissi is the chief god of all the southern tribes, and was until very recently worshipped universally by the tribes on the littoral of the Gold Coast, between the village of Appollonia, on the west, and that of Barracu, near Accra, on the east, as well as by the inland tribes of Wassaw, Arbra, and Assin. He it was, it was commonly believed, who had appointed the local deities, the spirits of the woods, rivers, hills, valleys, and sea. He was the lord of the thunder and lightning, and

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persons killed by the latter were believed to have provoked his anger. At other times he manifested his displeasure by storms and tornadoes, and especially by sending such torrents of rain that the mud dwellings of the natives fell in and crushed the occupants; and after any great loss of life from this cause the people would offer sacrifice to Bobowissi, asking how they had offended him. The name Bobowissi seems to mean "blower of clouds," whence "rain-maker." It is compounded of *bobor*, to blow, as of the wind, and *wissu*, a cloud.

The great day of sacrifice to Bobowissi is termed *Kohbor*, and falls a week before the termination of the *Ahohbor Kakrabah*, or, in other words, about the end of August.* On that day used to assemble in former times persons from all the western districts of the Gold Coast as far as Appollonia, as well as from the interior villages and towns of Fanti and Assin. Human victims were sacrificed, and the image of Bobowissi and his stool—for every god has his country stool (*egwah*), which is the local symbol of authority—were washed with their blood. Several days of festivity then ensued, and dancing, singing, shouting, the beating of drums, the blowing of horns, and the drinking of rum and palm wine continued till the performers fell prostrate through exhaustion or intoxication.

The Devil's Hill is said to be rich in gold, and it is known that a good deal of surface gold is collected by the natives after rain. This fact did not escape observation in the seventeenth century, when the different trading companies, who had forts on the coast, were eagerly ransacking every promising spot in search of

* See chapter on Mode of Reckoning Time.

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gold; and the agent of the English African Company endeavoured, about 1690, to there commence mining operations. But the natives positively forbade any disturbance of the soil, on the ground that it would be an outrage to their god; they threatened to resist any such attempt by force of arms; and the scheme was consequently abandoned.

After an intercourse of some years with Europeans, the Tshi-speaking inhabitants of the towns and villages in the vicinity of the various forts, added to their system of polytheism a new deity, whom they termed Nana-Nyankupon. This was the god of the Christians, borrowed from them, and adopted under a new designation. The great superiority manifested by the whites in their weapons, ships, manufactures—in short, in every respect—convinced the natives with whom they had intercourse, that they must necessarily be protected by a deity of greater power than any of those to which they themselves offered sacrifice; since their own deities had not, except very remotely, helped them to attain any such prosperity. They, therefore, gladly enrolled themselves amongst the followers of the god of the whites; and, being informed that he dwelt in the heavens above, they denominated him Nana-Nyankupon, which may be freely translated "Lord of the Sky."

The word *Nana*, literally "grandfather," is a title of respect, and is one used in addressing the King of Ashanti. The exact meaning of *nyankupon* is more obscure. There is a verb *nyan*, "to waken," and it is probable that *onyan*, "the awakener," was an old name for the sky. There is, it appears, no such name for it now in existence, but its former use is traceable in

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nyankum, "rain," and *nyan konton*, "rainbow," literally "sky curve." A later meaning is expressed in *nyansa*, "wisdom, knowledge, craft," and from the latter is probably derived *anyun* "witch," or "magician."

The adoption of Nana-Nyankupon, sometimes called simply Nyankupon, into the religious system of the natives, naturally did not cause the displacement of the former deities. It was simply the addition of one more to an already numerous family. Almost certainly even this innovation was strenuously resisted by the priesthood, a class who in every country and every age have very naturally shown a most rooted opposition to anything of the kind. The idea of the new god would also be disseminated slowly. The Europeans had trading establishments on the sea-coast; but they never, except at one or two solitary points, such as the Ancobra River near Axim, where the presence of gold some thirty miles inland, induced the Portuguese and Dutch to penetrate, formed establishments inland; and five or six miles from the sea, or even less, the country was a *terra incognita* to Europeans. The nature of the traffic in which the European nations, who had dotted the coast-line of the Gold Coast with their forts, were engaged, namely, the slave-trade, was also such as to prevent natives on the coast holding much intercourse with those of the interior; the latter being the great slave-supplying states, and the outlying villages of the former being often depopulated by them in their slave-hunts. There would be, too, no priests devoted to the worship of Nyankupon, to extol him and keep his name and fame before the minds of the people. Nor would it be at all in accordance with the ideas of the natives to

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inaugurate such a special priesthood. The other deities of their religious system were served by persons who either had inherited the required knowledge, or who had been prepared for the profession by a long novitiate, during which they had been initiated into the special mysteries of the god they elected to serve. All the rites and practices peculiar to the worship of each deity had the sanction of years of tradition and custom, and it could not be expected that the people would be able to initiate new rites for a new deity. To do so would be to assume that they could interpret the wishes of the new deity, since the ceremonies peculiar to the worship of each god were believed to be those most pleasing to him. Now no one could interpret the wishes of a god save the priests, the intermediaries between the gods and men. There were no priests for Nyankupon, therefore there was no one to say what would be pleasing to him; consequently no form of worship for Nyankupon was established. It must be remembered that in these days there were no missionaries, there was no attempt to proselytise the natives. Europeans came to the Gold Coast simply from greed. They cared nothing for the welfare, either bodily or mental, of the natives; and their great objects were to obtain their gold and to enslave their persons.

Nevertheless, in the course of two or three centuries, the belief in Nyankupon, thanks to the only too evident superiority in material welfare of the whites, gradually permeated the masses of the southern tribes. For the reasons already given there was no sacrifice offered to him, for the natives knew not what would please; but the idea gradually became formed that he was too

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distant or too indifferent to interfere directly in the affairs of the world. This idea was probably caused by the fact that the natives had not experienced any material improvement in their condition; the great difference in prosperity between themselves and the whites had not become less, although they also had become followers of their god. Now, to the native mind, a god that would not make some return for worship and flattery, was a god that it was useless to trouble about—unless, of course, he was malignant, in which case it would be wise to keep him in a good temper. But Nyankupon, so the Portuguese and Dutch had said, was not malignant, and only very occasionally manifested his anger.

However, the Europeans were so superior to the natives that the latter naturally inferred an equal disparity between their gods. Nyankupon, they reasoned, must be equally superior to Bobowissi. Thus, many of the attributes which had formerly been peculiar to Bobowissi, gradually became transferred to Nyankupon; and the latter gradually came to be considered the lord over the local deities, the spirits of the sea and rivers, of the woods and copses, of the hills and valleys, but to govern them through Bobowissi and not directly. To the anger of Nyankupon was also ascribed the thunder and lightning, the tornado and the flood. To these were added some special attributes, the result of their contact with Europeans. Small-pox, introduced by the latter, committed the most terrible ravages, and periodically carried off thousands of victims; while the internecine wars, provoked or encouraged by the slave-trade, and which caused the destruction of plantations

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and provision grounds, and the annihilation or exile of whole communities of agriculturists, introduced famine for the first time to the Gold Coast. Small-pox and famine having been unknown when Bobowissi was supreme, were clearly Nyankupon's own special modes of displaying anger. Two new calamities had followed the advent of the new god, they were therefore due to him.

Within the last twenty or thirty years the German missionaries, sent out from time to time by the mission societies of Basel and Bremen, have made Nyankupon known to European ethnologists and students of the science of religion; but, being unaware of the real origin of this god, they have generally spoken and written of him as a conception of the native mind, whereas he is really a god borrowed from Europeans and only thinly disguised. Hence some scholars have expressed surprise that the Negro tribes of the Gold Coast should have progressed so much further in their religious development than many other peoples occupying positions higher in the scale of civilisation, as to have formed a conception of a quasi-omnipotent god, residing in the heavens instead of upon the earth, and unapproachable by sacrifice. Finding many points of similarity between the Jahveh of the Jews and Nyankupon, the missionaries have made use of the latter name to express the word "god" in their sermons and discourses, thus reversing the process which the natives had themselves performed some two or three centuries earlier. But, to the native mind, Nyankupon is a being very different indeed to that which an educated European imagines his god to be. To the Negro of the

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Gold Coast Nyankupon is a material and tangible being, possessing a body, legs, and arms, in fact all the limbs, and the senses, and faculties of man. He is also believed to have passions similar to those of man. This, however, is but natural, and to the uncultured mind the conception of an immaterial being is impossible. There are many thousands in this condition in the United Kingdom.

Upon inquiring where Nyankupon dwelt, the missionaries were informed that he dwelt in Nyankupon-fih, or Nyankupon-kru, and these words have been put forward as showing that the Tshi-speaking natives have formed some idea of a heaven, analogous to that formed by Christians. But, on the contrary, they showed positively how material is the native's conception of Nyankupon. Every local god has some recognised place of ordinary abode. There is the house in which his image, stool, drums, and other appurtenances are kept, which he occasionally visits, and which is called the house of the god; and there is also his ordinary abode, the river, cliff, dark copse, or reef in the sea. A native, if asked where Bobowissi lived, would reply, "in his house," or "in Winnebah Hill." Similarly, upon being asked where Nyankupon lived, they replied "in Nyankupon-fih," that is "in Nyankupon's house," *fih* being a contraction of *effih*, "house;" or "in Nyankupon-kru," that is "in Nyankupon's country," which they could not localise more exactly because they did not know where it was.

At the present day Nyankupon is ignored rather than worshipped. He is considered too distant to interfere ordinarily in human affairs; but in times of

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famine or pestilence, or when there has been loss of life by storm or lightning, the people will sometimes call upon him, and ask how they have offended him. More frequently, however, under such circumstances they endeavour to propitiate the local deity, whom they appear to consider to have instigated Nyankupon. In fact Nyankupon is now really a deity of the ordinary type, like Bobowissi, who manifests his power by the infliction of calamities; but who is not so generally malignant as the minor deities, because he is too far off, and not so intimately acquainted with human affairs. Amongst the southern tribes, however, persons killed by lightning are generally believed to have been punished by Nyankupon for speaking disrespectfully of him

Now although Bobowissi was thus gradually superseded by Nyankupon, and reduced from his former position of chief deity of the southern tribes and ruler of the local deities, to one of subordination to Nyankupon, his worship did not decline without a struggle. Nor indeed is it yet dead, although shorn of its former fair proportions, and by the majority of the natives of the southern tribes Bobowissi is still considered as second only to Nyankupon; while in the remoter districts, there are still many who have not yet heard of the latter god, and for whom Bobowissi is still the chief ruler.

At the present day worshippers do not as a rule resort to Bobowissi's hill from a distance, but the people of Winnebah and the neighbouring villages still keep up the annual festival; and human sacrifices being prohibited within the limits of the Gold Coast

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Colony, sheep are now substituted for the former human victims. Bobowissi is, under Nyankupon, still the ruler of the local deities, and is the friend and protector, if properly propitiated, of all the southern tribes, and especially of persons undertaking a journey, Persons about to travel, for trade or for any other purpose, immediately before setting out invoke Bobowissi in the following terms: "*Nana Bobowissi, jeh hyen miankor jeh hyen miombah yi.*" "Grandfather Bobowissi, let us go and return in safety." On returning from their journey they say: "*Nana Bobowissi, yeh arbah.*" "Grandfather Bobowissi, we have come." And they add. "We thank you much for having gone with us." The proceeds of the journey are then displayed before a priest of Bobowissi, with the words: "Here is what we have brought," and the priest takes a share as an offering to the god.

In time of war Bobowissi is invoked by the inhabitants of all the southern portions of the Gold Coast, even by the people of those districts which have their own local war gods, for the latter are believed to act under the orders of Bobowissi. The god himself is described as being about twelve feet in height, black in colour, of human shape, and with hair like that of a mulatto. He is always depicted as bearing a native sword (*afŭnah*) in his right hand, while the left arm is folded behind his back.

The spirit of the River Abu-mehsu, which flows into the sea near the town of Attámbu, in Appollonia, is regarded as the wife of Bobowissi, and the local deities of Class 2 are sometimes regarded as her children. Abu-mehsu, however, as the goddess is

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called, is not generally worshipped by the inhabitants of the Gold Coast. Those of Appollonia and the neighbourhood worship her as their chief local deity; and the people of Winnebah used in former times to send to offer sacrifice to her on her sacred day; but I have not been able to discover any other instance of people coming from a distance.

Just as Bobowissi was the chief god of the southern tribes, so is Tando the chief of the Ashantis and northern tribes; and it is by him that the various local deities are believed to have been appointed. The name Tando seems to mean "Hater," being apparently derived from the verb *tan*, "to hate," and Tando is the god of the river of the same name, which, to the north-west of Coomassie, separates Ashanti from Gaman. He is of human shape, and in appearance resembles a mulatto. He wears long flowing robes, carries a sword in his hand, and is malignant. Human beings are sacrificed to him, the ordinary number on each occasion being fourteen, seven men and seven women.

Tando specially protects the Ashantis, whom he keeps informed of the secret machinations of their enemies. Sometimes, to assist them, he will assume the appearance of a male child; and, putting himself in the way of the enemy, will suffer them to take him as a captive to their towns, which he then devastates with a pestilence. The driver ants (*inkran*), which march in armies, are sacred to Tando, and must not be molested. As the conception of the borrowed god Nyankupon has not yet made much progress amongst the northern tribes, Tando is still supreme; and it is he who wields the lightning, and displays his anger by storm, pestilence,

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and flood. In past times people from the littoral of the Gold Coast used sometimes to send to Tando for tutelary deities for their towns ; and on his holy day deputations from all the interior Tshi-speaking tribes, and even from Dahomey, used to proceed to his place of abode. Since the Ashanti War of 1873–4, however, when Tando was found powerless to protect his chosen people, the Ashantis, his reputation has suffered severely in the minds of the northern tribes.

Tando has a wife, Katarwiri, the spirit of the river of the same name. She also is like a mulatto, and very large and stout. She is malignant, and women are sacrificed to her whenever her assistance is invoked. The crocodiles of the river are sacred to her.

It should be mentioned that whenever a tribe succeeded in casting off the yoke of Ashanti, it seceded from the worship of Tando, and adopted that of Bobowissi. Thus Wassaw, Denkera, Assin, &c., which were formerly feudatories of Ashanti, and worshippers of Tando, are now followers of Bobowissi. Such a change is quite natural according to native ideas. Tando is the special protector of the Ashantis, therefore, when refusing allegiance to Ashanti, it became necessary to choose another chief god. From the long series of struggles which took place between the Ashantis and the southern tribes, Bobowissi came to be regarded as antagonistic to Tando, so that any tribe seceding from Ashanti naturally chose him for their new protector ; and the very fact of their rebellion having been crowned with success, would convince them that Bobowissi had both the will and the power to protect them.

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CHAPTER IV.

SRAHMANTIN AND SASABONSUM.

SRAHMANTIN and Sasabonsum hold, as it were, an intermediate position between the general and local deities. In one sense they are local, since every district has one or more; and in another sense they are general, since they are known all over the Gold Coast by these names. Properly speaking, it seems as if Srahmantin and Sasabonsum were each a name of a genus of deities, every member of which possesses identical characteristics; though these names are in each locality used to designate individual deities.

Srahmantin (*Srahman* "ghost," or "spirit," and *tin*, an abbreviation of *tsintsin*, "tall,") always lives amongst the huge silk-cotton trees, which rear their enormous trunks far above the surrounding trees of the forest. Sasabonsum (*abonsŭm*, "malignancy, harmfulness, witchcraft") is also either found amongst such trees, or in hills or tracts of the forest where the earth is of a red colour. For convenience sake I will describe the latter first.

Sasabonsum is the friend of wizards and witches, and is a monstrous being, of human shape and red colour,

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with long hair. He has a propensity for human flesh, and he waylays and devours solitary wayfarers. He is the most cruel and malevolent of all the gods, and takes delight in destroying all those who have offended him, even though the offence may have been accidental and unintentional. He is believed to be implacable; and, once angered, can never be mollified or propitiated. He either resides in the darkest and gloomiest recesses of the forest where the earth is red, or amongst the silk-cotton trees (*bombaces*), or under ground where the earth is red. Every spot where the earth is of a red colour is believed to be, or to have been, the place of abode of a Sasabonsum; and the red colour is supposed to be caused by the blood of the victims destroyed by him. No day is set apart for Sasabonsum, and the offering ordinarily made to him is a human victim; but, within the colony, a sheep has been substituted since the prohibition of human sacrifices.

A Sasabonsum who lives in or near a *bombax*, displays his malignity by throwing it down upon passers-by; and one who lives in the earth, by shaking it or upheaving it, so that the houses fall in and crush the occupants. The latter is, in short, an earthquake god, and the natives, having no idea of the vast area over which an earthquake shock may be felt, and living under conditions in which intelligence is transmitted imperfectly and slowly, attribute in each village the destruction caused by an earthquake, to the nearest subterranean Sasabonsum.

In Ashanti and amongst the northern tribes, several persons are invariably put to death after an earthquake, as a sacrifice to Sasabonsum, and in the hope of satiating his cruelty for the time being. Houses that have been

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thrown down or damaged by earthquakes are, before being rebuilt or repaired, sprinkled or moistened with human blood. In 1881, a slight earthquake shock threw down a portion of the wall of the king's residence in Coomassie. The king, Mensah, consulted the priests as to what should be done, and the latter declared that the damage was the act of Sasabonsum, and that the ruined portion must be rebuilt of mud (*swish*) moistened with the blood of virgins. Fifty young girls were accordingly slaughtered, and the wall was rebuilt with *swish* kneaded in their blood. Slaves are often sacrificed when a building is commenced, to make it stable, and the foundations sprinkled with their blood. If, however, the building be unimportant, a sheep is usually slaughtered instead ; and the same substitute is made use of by those people who are unable to afford the expense of a human victim. The idea that human blood is necessary to make a foundation secure is very widespread, and traces of it may be discovered all over the world.

Srahmantin is a female deity, also of monstrous size and human shape, with long pendent breasts and long hair. Her colour is white. She is never found except in or among silk-cotton trees.

Like Sasabonsum, Srahmantin also waylays and seizes solitary wayfarers, but she does not devour them. She keeps them for four or five months, and then returns them to their respective villages, after which they become priests and priestesses of Srahmantin, who is believed to have taught them the mysteries of her worship. A day, said to be about the middle of July, is set apart as sacred to Srahmantin. A sheep is

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sacrificed, the ground at the foot of the *bombax* is cleared of underwood and weeds, and the tree smeared with the blood of the sacrifice.

It must not be supposed that every *bombax*, or group of *bombaces*, is the abode of a Srahmantin or a Sasabonsum. Such is not at all the case. Nor are the trees in which they may reside necessarily the largest or tallest of their kind in the neighbourhood. For instance, the silk-cotton tree at Kottor-krabah, at Cape Coast, which is certainly the finest of its kind in the locality, is not the abode of either of these deities. The Srahmantin of Cape Coast resides amongst some seven or eight smaller *bombaces*, in a valley which bounds Prospect Hill on the east.

The belief in the subterranean Sasabonsum is doubt less due to the destruction of property, and occasional loss of life, caused by earthquakes, as the belief in Srahmantin and the Sasabonsum who resides amongst the *bombaces*, is due to the frequent loss of life caused by the falling of such trees. The silk-cotton trees seem to be specially attacked by white ants, and towering far above the other trees of the forest, and offering a prominent object, are frequently struck by lightning. In either case the tree is killed, but the tall, gaunt trunk remains standing until it falls through a gradual process of decay, or, half-decayed, is prostrated by a tornado. In a few miles of forest-path, dozens of dead silk-cotton trees, ready to fall at the first violent gust of wind, are passed, and it is inevitable that in falling they should sometimes crush passers-by. In 1881 three such trees fell across the path, while I was traversing the last half-mile of the road from Inyaso to

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Yan-Coomassie Assin, during a tornado; and deaths resulting from such accidents are not so uncommon as might be supposed. At the commencement of the Ashanti War in 1873, the chief of Abessin, a province of Ashanti, was crushed, with a number of his household, by a gigantic silk-cotton tree which fell on his tent during the night; and the Ashantis at once attributed the accident to a Sasabonsum. In fact, throughout the Gold Coast, persons killed by the falling of such trees, are believed to be the victims of this god or of Srahmantin.

The general ideas as to the appearance of these two deities are those which I have given; but as there is no standard of orthodoxy in such matters, there is some considerable variety of opinion. For instance, an old agriculturist in a remote bush-village described the local Srahmantin to me as being possessed of twelve heads, a belief which, on enquiry, he appeared to have derived from his father.

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CHAPTER V.

LOCAL DEITIES.

To endeavour to give a separate account of each one of the many thousands of local deities is, of course, impossible. It will be sufficient for the purpose of illustration to give a short description of those believed to exist in two or three districts, and which may be taken as typical of those found elsewhere. I will first commence with those districts where the natives have been the most subjected to European influence.

In the district of Cape Coast there are the following local deities of the land:

(1). Fohsu (perhaps a corruption of *fusu*, "moist, damp") is the chief deity of the Cape Coast district, and resides in the high headland on the western side of the salt pond at Cape Coast. She is monstrous in size and whitish in colour, but is not malignant, and supplies salt for her people. The collecting of salt by evaporation from shallow salt-pans on the brink of the salt pond is a prominent industry at Cape Coast. In former times sheep were sacrificed to Fohsu, but now fowls only, with eggs, rum, palm-oil, etc. The house in which her drums, stool, and other

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appurtenances are kept, is situated near the village of Suru on the eastern side of the salt pond.

(2). On the other side of the salt pond, nearly opposite to Fohsu's dwelling-place, at the spot known as Abbo m' (in the rock) is the god Adzi-anim. (This name is simply to imply "something done openly.") He is of human shape and black in colour, but very small. He is described as having the ways of such birds as are found in the neighbourhood of fresh water, such as wag-tails. Birds of this description are sacred to him, and point out to the worshippers of Adzi-anim where they are to dig in order to find good water, of which the god himself is the local provider. Fowls were formerly sacrificed to him, but now worship and sacrifice for him is included with that of Fohsu, whose husband he is believed to be, and before long he will be probably altogether lost sight of as a distinct deity.

These two are the only local deities of the land that are commonly worshipped at Cape Coast at the present day. That there were formerly many more is certain, and the following are some who have only ceased to be worshipped within the memory of man.

Djwi-j'ahnu (said to imply "mediator"—*Djwi*, v., to be peaceful; *ahnu*, n., mouth) was a god who formerly resided at Connor's Hill. Tradition says that the people of Cape Coast first discovered his existence from the great loss which the Ashantis experienced at this spot during their attack on Cape Coast on the 11th of July, 1824. The slaughter was so great, and the repulse of the Ashantis so complete, that the Fantis, accustomed to see their foes carry everything before them, attributed the unusual result of the engagement to the assistance

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of a powerful local god. They accordingly sacrificed some prisoners to him, and sent to Winnebah to inquire of the priests of Bobowissi if their surmise was correct. The reply being in the affirmative, a regular *culte* was established, according to the directions of the priests of Bobowissi. At that time Connor's Hill was covered with unusually dense bush, which swarmed with snakes. Indeed, even at the present day, when the bush is cleared every year, they are still very numerous, and large numbers are killed by the West Indian soldiers employed in this work. From this circumstance probably arose the idea that Djwi-j'ahnu ordinarily presented himself to his worshippers in the shape of a serpent—in the shape of the cerastes, one of the most deadly of the *ophidia*. Other snakes accompanied him, and were regarded as his offspring or dependants. The first sacrifices offered were human victims, but in later times eggs became the ordinary offering. If the god did not present himself to his worshippers in his assumed form, it was imagined that one of their number had given him offence, and the priests then made inquiries to discover the offender. He, being found, would then be mulcted of a sheep, a white cloth, and some rum; and with this special propitiatory offering the worshippers would again proceed to the hill. If the god still remained invisible, it was assumed that he was still dissatisfied, that the atonement was insufficient; and additional offerings were enforced from the guilty member till the god revealed himself. Djwi-j'ahnu was also believed to assume other shapes; and a leopard, which some thirty years ago haunted the vicinity of the hill, and became by its depredations the

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terror of the neighbourhood, was believed to be the god who had adopted that form. When undisguised, Djwi-j'ahnu was believed to be of human shape and black in colour, but of monstrous size. He was represented as bearing a native sword in his right hand. His worship has now been extinct for some twenty years, the acquisition of the hill by the Imperial Government, the clearing of the bush, and the building of huts for the accommodation of troops, having proved fatal to the continuance of this particular *culte*.

Another god formerly worshipped was Kottor-krabah, who resided at the wells now known by that name. The tradition is that the first family that migrated from the interior to the coast — several traditions speak of the Fantis and other tribes as having originally come from the interior beyond Coomassie— brought with them a local god, who had, through the priests, expressed his willingness to accompany them. This deity, who for the convenience of carriage had assumed the shape of a land-crab, was carried in an earthen pot, whence the name Kottor-krabah, "Crab-pot." On arriving at the site of the present Kottor-krabah wells, the emigrants were reduced to great straits for want of water, there being no streams or fresh-water pools for many miles round. In this extremity they applied to the god for assistance, and placed the pot containing him on the ground at the foot of two large silk-cotton trees, one of which still remains. The god, in the shape of a crab, at once left the pot; and, burrowing into the earth, reappeared with a ball of wet clayey earth; showing thereby where his people might dig for water. The two silk-

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cotton trees were afterwards named N'ihna-attah (*Ihna*, silk-cotton-tree; *attah*, twins), and were regarded as belonging to the god, who, it was believed, resided in or under them. One tree was said to be male, and one female. Sheep were in former times sacrificed to Kottor-krabah, and twins born in Cape Coast were carried to the trees to be named. This was done as late as 1874, but the influx of Mohammedans, who since the formation of the Houssa Constabulary have migrated to the Coast in considerable numbers, and have at Kottor-krabah established a Mohammedan quarter, has led to the discontinuance of the worship of this god.

Mi-impahno, "My Beach," was a god formerly worshipped as the guardian of the landing-place at Cape Coast, and any trader landing there was required to present a portion of his goods. The imposition of Customs regulations, and the enclosure of the spot in which the god resided, has now, however, caused this worship to fall into disuse.

As I have already stated, the sea possesses its own gods, who are very numerous. In the dim past, however, it seems that the sea was worshipped as one god; and a tradition of the migration of the Tshi-speaking tribes from the interior, given in Chapter XXIII., says that the Fantis, on first beholding the sea, worshipped it, calling it *Bohsum' poh*. This action is one which might naturally be expected from a people, who, presumably, were already possessed of a system of polytheism in which powers in Nature were deified; for the motion and roar of the sea could not fail to impress them with a sense of its power. In course of time, however, when villages sprang up every few miles

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along the coast, local deities of the sea seem to have taken the place of a general deity of the sea, and the latter has now been lost sight of. But as late as 1873 it was worshipped by the inland tribes, and up to about 1869 Ashantis used to resort to Elmina on a certain day to offer human sacrifices to it.

The marine gods of Cape Coast are:

(1). Tahbi, who resides in or under the rock on which Cape Coast Castle is built, where the surf breaks with great violence. He is the chief god of the sea in this neighbourhood, and is of immense size and black. He is of human shape, with the exception of his left hand, which is like the fin of a shark. Tahbi is malignant and destroys life, and the bodies of his victims are said to be rarely recovered. In 1876, two men of the Houssa Constabulary, who were drowned while bathing at a Saturday morning bathing parade, were believed by the natives to have been seized by Tahbi. The Houssas, being an inland people, cannot, as a rule, swim; but as the sea was calm at the time, Tahbi's existence and malignity received, to the native mind, conclusive additional proof.

(2). Tahbi-yiri, "Tahbi's wife" inhabits another rock about seven hundred yards to the west of that of Tahbi. She is malignant and destroys life, but has a peculiar animosity to people who do not belong to the district. She is described as being like a mermaid, white in colour, but with a woolly head. In her left hand she carries a calabash. Her breasts were formerly firm, but are now long and pendent as she is growing old. The notion of this goddess may perhaps have been derived from Europeans. Tradition says that before the advent

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of the English, in the time of the Portuguese, some fishermen, who were far out at sea, met her swimming towards the land; and, following her, saw her disappear in the rock which she has inhabited ever since.

(3). Cudjo is the god of a shoal or reef between Cape Coast Castle and Acquon Point, on which, in bad weather, the surf breaks very dangerously. Formerly he was considered malignant, but now he is considered friendly, and as preventing the approach of foes by sea. He is of diminutive stature and black in colour.

(4). Ahtoh-enteffi (said to imply "where some one spits." *Toh enteffi*, v., to spit), is the god of the surf which breaks heavily between the landing-place at Cape Coast and the suburb of Omanfo. He is malignant and of human shape, but monstrous in size. He is white in colour, but has the woolly head of a Negro.

(5). Abroh-ku (the name of a snake-like fish) is the god of the surf which breaks upon the landing-place. As it is not usually heavy there, he is not considered a very powerful god. Formerly he was considered malicious, but not malignant; upsetting canoes, and causing fishermen to lose the result of their labour, rather than destroying life. Now, however, he is considered friendly, and it is the wave that he raises which brings the canoe safely to the shore. He is of the colour of wood-ashes, of human shape, but very small and round, with a short and broad face.

(6). Ichar-tsirew (this word is said to imply something slippery. *Pah tsirew*, v., to slip) inhabits a large rounded rock on the beach about four hundred yards to the east of the Castle. She is black in colour, and of ordinary human shape and size. No man may intrude

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on this rock or in its immediate neighbourhood, and it is the place to which women resort to wash. New-born children of either sex were formerly carried here to be given names; and when a girl was about to be married, she was taken to the rock, and from thence to the husband's home. An offering of rum was poured into a hole in the rock, and a piece, or pieces, of white cloth laid upon it. This was believed to promote peace in the household of the future wife, and also to guarantee a safe recovery from the dangers of maternity. Ichartsirew carries a scourge in her right hand, with which she drives away intrusive males.

These six, all of which are believed to reside on a sea-front of about one mile, will give some idea of the multiplicity of the marine gods.

Akum-brohfo, "slayer of white men," is another marine god, and the enemy of white men, whom he destroys by upsetting their boats. This god is obviously of not very great antiquity, and has been apparently introduced to account for the number of instances in which, when boats are capsized, the white occupants, encumbered with their clothes, and either unable to swim or less powerful swimmers than the black crew, are the only persons drowned. Since the blacks, though equally thrown into the water, escape, while the whites perish, it is evident to the native mind that the god has a special dislike for the latter. Every town or considerable village along the coast, to which vessels resort for trade, and where Europeans are in the habit of landing, has its Akum-brohfo, though these may differ in shape, size, or colour. The inferior hamlets, off which vessels do not lie, have no local Akum-brohfo, and this fact

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furnishes additional evidence as to what caused the conception of this god to arise. At some places the Akum-brohfo is believed to cause those vessels which may anchor near his habitat to be wrecked, by tearing up their anchors so that they drift on to the rocks. The Cape Coast representative of this class of deity resides in a rock in the sea opposite the Colonial Hospital.

The Ahanta district, near Cape Three Points, furnishes an instance of the genesis of an Akum-brohfo. Near the village of Akwordah, spelt in the maps Aquidah, is a rock in the sea, which formerly had no distinctive name, and was not supposed to be the abode of any god; but, a few years ago, a ship's cutter was wrecked upon it and nine of the white crew drowned, and the natives at once named the rock Akum-brohfo, they having concluded from the accident that a local "slayer of white men" there resided.

All the foregoing local deities of Cape Coast, with the exception of the Akum-brohfo, who, as he did not injure black people, did not require propitiation, had formerly each a day set apart on which it was proper to offer sacrifice. Sheep, fowls, rum, palm-oil, etc., were offered, the most valuable offerings being made to the most malignant, and the inferior to the less powerful. Now, however, in the decadence of this old form of religious belief, which cannot withstand on the one hand the incessant inroads of Christianity, and on the other the scepticism caused by the ridicule openly cast upon the gods by Europeans, and by the immunity of the latter from punishment even when they desecrate the habitation of a local god, one day is considered

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sufficient for the whole of the marine gods, and each has no longer its own special day. Of the gods of the land, Adzi-anim has, as already stated, been compelled to adopt the day of Fohsu, and sacrifice for these two is made on a different day to that set apart for the marine gods. This day falls at the commencement of the dry season, and is no doubt so selected because it is only during that season that the collecting of salt by evaporation can be carried on.

The district of Moree, a village situated some five or six miles to the east of Cape Coast, has the following local deities :

(1). Aynfwa (a word said to imply "not to be looked upon," and, hence, "relentless, implacable"), a goddess, of human size and shape, but covered from head to foot with short and close white hair, like that of a goat. She resides to the east of Moree, on the path from that village to Anamaboe, at a point where it descends to the sea-beach. Any worshipper of Aynfwa who may wish to procure the death of an enemy, has only to proceed to this spot, invoke Aynfwa, and call aloud the name of the person whose death is desired, and, according to native belief, that death will shortly take place. In a house on the eastern side of the village, near the beach, is preserved the image of Aynfwa. In the right hand is a native sword, and in the crown of the head there is a small hole into which worshippers pour offerings of rum, while at the same time they lay before her pieces of blue baft. This dark blue cloth, usually worn as a sign of mourning by the Fantis, is given to Aynfwa because, as she herself is white, white cloth would not suit her. Aynfwa is the special protectress of Albinos.

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From some cause, perhaps from centuries of intermarriage, an unusual number of Albino children are born at Moree. Sometimes as many as two or three Albino infants may be seen there at one time, a number out of all proportion to the usual production of such children; and, at the present time, 1886, there are said to be eight Albinos in Moree, which is in a proportion of about one per cent. of the inhabitants. The frequent tendency of succeeding generations to reproduce deviations from the national type is well known, and the probable explanation of the unusual proportion of Albinos to the population of Moree is that the different families there have intermarried for a considerable number of years until the strain of blood in which the abnormality first presented itself, is now, to a greater of less degree, common to all. Albinos are, at Moree, sacred to Aynfwa, and, on arriving at puberty, become her priests and priestesses. They are regarded by the people as the mouthpieces of the goddess; their directions are implicitly obeyed, and in former days an Albino had only to indicate a man or woman as one whose death Aynfwa desired, and the immediate immolation of the victim ensued. The enforcement of English law, under which such sacrifices are regarded as murders, has now put an end to this practice.

(2). Ampah (literally "true," but said in this case to be a corruption of *Nimpah papah*, "good person"). The place of abode of this god is the small lagoon which bounds on the eastern side the promontory on which Moree is built. He is of human shape and size, of ferocious aspect, and a brown colour. He is represented as holding a casting-net in his hands, for he is the pro-

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tector of the fishing industry of Moree, and, when fish are scarce, procures them for his worshippers. Bullocks are sacrificed to him, and a peculiarity of his worship is that all offerings must be made to him by persons entirely naked. When not properly propitiated he becomes malignant, and destroys life.

(3). Fuan-fuan-fo (said to mean "driver of men"), is the war-god of Moree. He is of human shape but monstrous in size, and very black. He is always represented as carrying in his left hand a flint-lock musket, and in his right a whip, with which he drives his people into the van of battle. Formerly captives taken in war were sacrificed to him, or, failing these, a slave from amongst the inhabitants of the village; for it was believed that if he were not propitiated with a human victim, he would turn against the people of Moree. Now, however, a sheep is substituted, and the image and the stool are washed with the blood of this animal instead of with that of a man. In time of war the image is carried into action, but kept in the rear. It was last taken out during the Ashanti war of 1873-4, and was at the actions of Dunquah and Yan-Coomassie Fanti in March and April, 1873, and at that of Djuquah in June. In all these the Fantis were defeated, but the belief in the people of Moree in their war-god was not thereby shaken, the priests explaining these reverses by saying that the Ashantis had a more powerful war-god with them; while his right to the title of their protector from the dangers of war, received in their eyes additional confirmation from the fact that out of the entire contingent furnished from Moree and its de-

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pendent hamlets, only one man was killed and two wounded.

The marine gods of the Moree district present the same general characteristics as those of Cape Coast.

The district of Elmina has the following local gods.

(1). Ihtúri (this word is said to mean "place of guns," *ihtur*, n., a gun, and to be so called because of the frequent skirmishes which took place here between the people of Cape Coast and Elmina) is the god of the rivers Sirwi and Kakum,* which discharge by one mouth into the sea at the spot where he resides. He is of human shape, but monstrous in size, white in colour, with long hair, and wears long flowing garments. He has a whip raised in his right hand. He is malignant, and destroys life; but is considered friendly to the Elminas and Ashantis. Upon a certain day in January, the people of Elmina and the neighbourhood used to assemble at Ihtúri Kru, a village at the mouth of the river, to offer sacrifice to Ihtúri, and from each separate district was brought a full-grown male human victim. These men's heads were struck off in a house in Ihtúri Kru where the image and stool of the god are kept, and then disembowelled; the image and stool being first washed with the blood, and then covered with the intestines. The ceremony then terminated with the usual drumming, dancing, firing of guns, and drinking of rum.

* The Kakum is called by the English the Sweet River. Its native name means "Biter to death"—*ka* (to bite), *kum* (to kill).

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(2). Kottor b'insin (said to mean "tract of crabs") lives between Ihtúri Kru and Elmina, but close to the latter. This is a goddess, of the size and shape of an ordinary woman, white in colour, and with hair resembling that of a mulatto. She is not malignant, and is regarded as the protector of mulattoes. Until very recently, when a mulatto child was born, it was carried to the house where her paraphernalia are kept, and given a name, offerings of rum, cloth, etc., being made by the family.

(3). Koko-ibi (a name given by the Elminas to white men) is the husband of Kottor b'insin, and resides near her. He is of the size and shape of an ordinary man, and white in colour. Sheep were formerly sacrificed to him. He is not malignant, and, like his wife, is regarded as a protector of mulattoes.

(4). Bons'ahnu (*bonsu*, a whale, and *ahnu*, mouth; whence, "swallower of men") is a marine god who lives in a rock in the sea, between Ihtúri Kru and Elmina, where the surf breaks very heavily. He is of human shape and size, and black in colour, and is always represented as wielding a native sword. He is malignant, and destroys life. Human sacrifices were, until comparatively recent times, made to him. The people from Elmina and the neighbouring villages, such as Ampeni, Amquon, and Abardo, used to proceed on a certain day to the house in which the image and stool were kept, and there sacrifice a human victim, who was generally furnished from Elmina. As usual, the image and stool were washed with the blood of the sacrifice.

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(5). Behnya is the god of the river Behnya (commonly written Beyah). He is of human shape and size, and black in colour. In his right hand he carries a whip, and in his left a sword. He is the war-god of the Elminas, and his image is carried into action. It was to his influence that the failure of the confederated Fanti tribes to force a way into Elmina in the war of 1869 was attributed. Behnya is malignant, and human victims, generally Fanti prisoners, used to be offered to him. After the image and stool had been washed with the blood of a victim, the body was cut up into a number of small pieces, which were distributed round the outskirts of the town so as to enclose it. A sheep has now been substituted for the higher offering, but its flesh is distributed in the same way, and this distribution is believed to render it impossible for a hostile force to make its way into the town. Behnya is of some antiquity. In January, 1482, when the Portuguese expedition, under Diego d'Azambuja, arrived at Elmina, where it had been decided to build a fort, the workmen who had accompanied the expedition commenced quarrying the rock in which Behnya is believed to reside. Excited by this outrage, which was quite unintentional on the part of the Portuguese, the natives flew to arms, and attacking the workmen, wounded several and drove them from their work; and it was only with great difficulty that they were finally appeased by apologies and presents.

(6). Nana enna ("grandmother") is the wife of Behnya, who remains in the town as protectress of the women, when the men have gone to war. She

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is black in colour, and resembles an old woman. She resides in the hill upon which Fort St. Jago is built, and ewes are sacred to her. The women always carry her image with them when they are taking supplies to the men in time of war.

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CHAPTER VI.

LOCAL DEITIES (*continued*).

I NOW propose to give descriptions of some Local Deities of districts further removed from the sea and European influence.

Brahfo.—In the palmy days of the worship of Bobowissi, when thousands of people annually proceeded to Winnebah to consult the priests and seek the favour of the great god, the priests of Bobowissi, having perhaps more business on hand than they could manage, or perhaps afraid that, if they entirely monopolised the profitable business of imposture, the priests of the other districts would raise schisms, decided to appoint a deputy to Bobowissi, to whom smaller matters might be referred. They accordingly gave out that Bobowissi, weary of being incessantly troubled about unimportant affairs by his worshippers, had appointed another god to act for him in minor matters. The new god was to be regarded as Bobowissi's messenger, and his utterances were to be considered as his. His name was Brahfo, a word which means "deputy" in the Tshi language, and the people were to send delegates to Ashanti, where the god would be shown to them by the local priests. From Ashanti he

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was to be brought to the town of Mankassim, where he was to reside.

This was accordingly done, or, at least, so says the tradition, and the worship of Brahfo soon became inferior only to that of Bobowissi; while, as the fame of the latter declined, that of Brahfo increased, until he was almost considered the chief deity by the natives of those districts contiguous to Mankassim. Five or six priests ministered at the shrine of this god, whose place of abode was in a dark and gloomy hollow of the forest, where the foliage was so dense that scarcely a ray of light could penetrate it. In the dim half-light of this hollow, the priests were enabled to make better arrangements than usual for the deception of the credulous natives; while their number permitted them to prearrange various impostures. The worshipper who wished to consult Brahfo was led blindfolded into the gloomy hollow by one or two of the priests; while the remainder, concealed in the surrounding underwood or amidst the branches of the trees, gave vent to unearthly sounds and cries, which appeared to the terrified worshipper to proceed from the earth beneath and from the air above. After this had continued sufficiently long, a priest would be inspired by Brahfo, and would give vent to the oracular utterances. Thus, from the additional mystery that surrounded him, Brahfo came to be regarded as superior to all the other local deities; but it was only after application to the latter had been unproductive, after the priest of a local deity had been unable to obtain from him those predictions or that assistance that was required, that recourse was had, by people who did not reside in the immediate neighbourhood of Mankassim, to Brahfo.

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To increase the reputation of their god, the priests of Brahfo would sometimes, when the blindfolded worshipper was led to the hollow, dispense with all the sounds and cries, and preserve a solemn silence. They would then call upon the god, but no sound would be heard; and, after one or two appeals, the worshipper would be informed that Brahfo would not deign to manifest himself, that the day was not propitious, or that the worshipper had not made sufficient offerings to gain his favour. In this manner they would extort still further sums from their dupes, and sometimes detain them for weeks and even months, reducing them to absolute penury before they would give a reply to the questions asked. The sacrifices ordinarily made to Brahfo were human victims, two or three at a time, except at times of public calamity, when the number of victims was increased. At such periods, in time of invasion, pestilence, or drought, the inhabitants of all the neighbouring towns and villages would meet together, and proceed in procession to seek the assistance of the god.

As Brahfo had thus come to be regarded the chief god and protector of Fanti proper, his reputation sustained a rude shock when, at the first invasion of Fanti in 1807, the Ashantis under Osai Tutu Kwamina, carried everything before them. The war was caused, however, by the refusal of the chiefs of Fanti to deliver to the Ashantis two Assin chiefs who had fled to Fanti territory for protection; and as the priests of Brahfo had always strenuously urged the surrender of these fugitives, they explained the defeat of the worshippers of the god by saying that he had delivered them into

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the hands of their enemies because they had neglected to obey his instructions; and by such reasoning the natives were once more reconciled to his worship. The Ashantis razed Mankassim to the ground, but, influenced by their own superstitious fears, were exceedingly careful not to interfere in any way with the hollow in which Brahfo dwelt.

About 1850 the priests of Brahfo were nearly the means of bringing about a formidable insurrection against the Colonial Government, but in the end their machinations resulted in the temporary downfall of their god. It was not until 1835 that any attempt was made to introduce Christianity amongst the natives of the Gold Coast. In that year the first missionary of the Wesleyan Society arrived at Cape Coast, and about 1849 or 1850 a Wesleyan chapel was established at a small village adjoining Mankassim, close to the hollow in the forest sacred to Brahfo. The worshippers of the god did not in any way interfere with the followers of this new religion, for an absolute tolerance in all such matters prevails, and every man is at liberty to worship any god he pleases; but the new converts to Christianity soon commenced a series of annoying persecutions against their pagan neighbours. They openly insulted the worshippers of Brahfo and mocked at their belief; while, to crown all, they cut down trees in the tract belonging to the god, and shot, in the hollow itself, an antelope, which animal is locally sacred to Brahfo.

The priests, foreseeing that their occupation would be gone if they tamely submitted to such insults offered to their god, prevailed upon the Fanti chiefs to take the matter into serious consideration. A council was held,

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and it was agreed that the chiefs should mutually combine to punish the next persons who might insult their god; while Adu, chief of Mankassim, was, as he resided on the spot, appointed by the rest the immediate guardian of Brahfo's honour. As for the outrages that had already been committed, the people believed that the god himself would soon make a dreadful example of those who had perpetrated them.

Shortly after the meeting of the priests, three Christians, actuated by a spirit of defiance, went boldly into Brahfo's hollow and there cut several poles for building purposes. The priests at once called upon Adu to avenge their god. He accordingly called out his men, seized and bound all the Christians, ten in number, before daybreak, fired their houses, and carried them to Mankassim as prisoners. Intelligence of this deed was immediately conveyed to the colonial authorities, and Adu was ordered to release the prisoners at once, and to appear before the judicial assessor at Cape Coast Castle to answer for his conduct. To this Adu demurred, but he promised not to injure the prisoners; and as he had the support of all the Fanti chiefs a compromise was at length arrived at, Adu consenting to go to Anamaboe to have the whole matter inquired into.

On the appointed day the Fanti chiefs assembled at that town with over three thousand armed followers. The judicial assessor, after hearing the evidence on both sides, found that the Christian converts had intentionally insulted the worshippers of Brahfo, and that their conduct had been calculated to provoke disturbances. He therefore sentenced them to pay a fine of £20 to the Fanti chiefs. Adu did not deny his act, which he and

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the other chiefs justified as a duty which he owed the god; but, for his contempt of law and of the authority of the Government, he was fined £40, and further ordered to pay to the Christians the value of the property destroyed, and which was assessed at £56.

To this compensation for losses the chiefs strenuously objected, saying that they could not compromise the dignity of their god by making a payment that must greatly offend him. They also urged that it was essential, to avert the wrath of the god from the whole country, that the Christians should be prevented from returning to the neighbourhood of Mankassim. Finding, however, that there was no probability of the decision being reconsidered, they feigned submission to it; Anfu Otu, chief of Arbra, and Amunu, chief of Anamaboe, becoming security for the payment of the fine and compensation.

The followers of the chiefs had not been admitted to the court, but as soon as the result of the inquiry was made known to them, they seized their arms; and Adu, surrounded by more than a thousand excited men, was raised on their heads and carried defiantly round the town, while songs in honour of Brahfo were sung. Some kegs of powder were carried in front of the chief, as a sign that he was prepared to fight in defence of his god, and shouts were raised to exterminate the Christians. The two chiefs who had become responsible for the payment were denounced as traitors to their religion; and Adu retired with his people to Mankassim, supported and applauded by the inhabitants of every village through which he passed.

At Mankassim Adu made every preparation for war, providing himself with large quantities of powder and

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lead, and cutting war-paths through the bush. He disregarded several summonses to go to Cape Coast, and maintained himself for four months in an attitude of armed defiance. He was supported by the majority of the Fanti chiefs, and the sympathies of the populace were entirely with him. Anfu Otu and Amunu were willing to pay the sums for which they were responsible; but this mode of escape from the difficulty was considered unsatisfactory, and the Governor, Mr. Bannerman, decided to send an expeditionary force against Adu.

But the chiefs and head-men of Cape Coast, when asked if they would furnish a contingent, as was usual, said they could not go and fight against their god Brahfo, nor could they engage in a war in which the religious feelings of the whole people were concerned. They, however, offered to send a deputation to Adu, to persuade him to submit; and begged the Governor to defer his hostile intentions for a week. The offer was gladly accepted, but in the meantime the soldiers of the garrison were ostentatiously paraded daily, and exercised with rockets and field-guns. These demonstrations, coupled with the arguments of the Cape Coast deputation, had the desired effect. Adu, with a very numerous retinue of armed men, came to Cape Coast and apologised for his conduct. The judgment of the judicial assessor was upheld, the sums paid, and fifty ounces of gold-dust deposited as a security for good behaviour for two years.

All these occurrences had naturally the effect of concentrating the attention of the people upon the worship of Brahfo. During the four months over which these events extended, no rain fell; the plantations and provision grounds were parched, and the people

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absolutely suffered from want of water. The priests gladly utilised this as a proof of the displeasure of the god, because those who had insulted him had been insufficiently punished. During the palaver at Anamaboe, Anfu Otu had had a fit; two months later he died, and this also was construed as a signal mark of the vengeance of the god, on account of his desertion of his cause. It was more than suspected, however, that Anfu Otu really died by poison, administered through the agency of the priests. Adu's refusals to proceed to Cape Coast had always been instigated by the priests, whom he had consulted as to the answer he should return, and who told him Brahfo forbade any such submission. On the last occasion, when the Cape Coast deputies were sent, the priests saw it was time to give way. They, therefore, when Adu made sacrifice and inquired what he should do, replied that he might go without fear.

The popular mind was much perturbed, and the priests, baffled in their endeavour to unite the people against the Government and maintain the supremacy of their god, now endeavoured to arrive at the latter end by less overt means. They conceived that if the leaders of the Christians were removed, the spread of such intolerance as had been exhibited would cease; while the death of their foes would be attributed to the vengeance of Brahfo. It was therefore decided to poison four prominent native Christians at Anamaboe, and, in order to arrange the plan of operations, a council of priests and priestesses met in the dead of night at a lonely spot by a small lagoon near Anamaboe.

Now, amongst those who thus assembled was a

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priest named Kwoffi Kumah, who soon afterwards had reason to become dissatisfied with the conduct of a brother professional upon a private matter. It appeared that his wife, who had gone to consult a priest respecting the sickness of her child, had been violated by him. She informed her husband, and, as the ravisher denied the fact, Kwoffi Kumah insisted that both should go to the priests of Brahfo in order that the truth might be discovered. Upon this, the priest told him that Brahfo was no god at all, that the whole business was an imposition, and that he himself must know this since he had frequently assisted. It seems that although Kwoffi Kumah had, as a priest of a local deity, often deceived and imposed upon the people who had come to him, yet so great was his awe of the god Brahfo, that he had never suspected that his priests were likewise simply impostors. Failing to receive any satisfaction for the outrage committed upon his wife, he proceeded to Cape Coast and privately informed the judicial assessor of the plot to poison the four Christians at Anamaboe, and also of the mode in which the priests of Brahfo managed their deceptions. The priests were accordingly charged with a conspiracy to commit murder. Nineteen of them, men and women, were convicted, the men sentenced to be publicly flogged and to be imprisoned with hard labour for five years, and the women to two years' imprisonment. During the investigation, the system of fraud and imposture practised by the priests of Brahfo was fully exposed. Crowds of people attended during the trial, and when conviction was brought home to their minds, they left the Castle crying: "What can we now do in sickness

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or distress? Whither can we fly for succour? Our gods have been proved to be no gods. Our priests have deceived us." *

The immediate result of this exposure was the entire desertion by the people of Brahfo's hollow in the forest; and Adu, attributing his losses to the advice of the priests, compelled them to refund to him the amounts which he had been fined. But superstition dies hard, and it was only for a few years that the worship of Brahfo ceased. As the memory of these events died out, his worship was gradually revived, and it is now again in a flourishing condition; though the god has never quite regained in the minds of the natives his former pre-eminence over the other local deities. At the present time Brahfo is ministered to by four or five priests, who have constructed a subterranean chamber, about fifteen feet square, in which the image of the god is kept, surrounded by a number of smaller images which represent his dependents. Antelopes are sacred to him, and no worshipper of Brahfo may molest one, or eat of its flesh.

Prah ("The Sweeper").—There are many deities of this name, all of whom are spirits of the River Prah, called by the natives Bohsŭm-Prah. At each town or considerable village upon its banks, sacrifice is held on a day about the middle of October, to Prah; and from the fact of the one day being common to all the peoples dwelling on the river, and that the sacrificial ceremonies are the same throughout, it seems evident that originally this worship was established for one great deity of the river; although now, through lapse of time and a con-

* Cruickshank.

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fusion of ideas, in the majority of cases the inhabitants of each village believe in the existence of a separate spirit of the Prah, who resides in some part of the river near their hamlet. This multiplication of one original god would naturally occur. The people of each village, accustomed for years to offer sacrifice at a part of the river near them, would almost certainly, after some lapse of time, conceive that the god dwelt in that part; and this idea would probably be supported by the local priests, for their own purposes. Additional evidence of the original unity of all the existing gods of the Prah, is afforded by the fact that everywhere along the river the priests of these gods officiate in groups of three, two male and one female, an arrangement which is peculiar to the worship of Prah.

As loss of life frequently occurs in this river, from persons attempting to cross it when flooded, from a sudden rise, and from those hundred minor accidents which must always occur in the neighbourhood of a deep and strong stream, the gods of the Prah are considered very malignant. The sacrifice is, in consequence, proportionate. The usual sacrifice in former times was two human adults, one male and one female. They were either prisoners of war, or slaves purchased from a distance. The victims were decapitated on the bank of the river, and the stool and image of the god washed with their blood. The bodies were then cut into a number of pieces, which were distributed amongst the mangroves, or the sedge bordering the river, for the crocodiles to eat; crocodiles being sacred in Prah. This was followed by the usual drumming, singing, dancing, and drinking, and all the people wore white cloths in sign of rejoicing.

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Seven days later a bullock was killed, and divided amongst the inhabitants of the village and those of the subordinate hamlets, who, in turn, brought each an offering—one a fowl, another rum, a third money, a fourth palm-oil, and so on, and these accumulated offerings, gathered together, were given to the priests of Prah.

At the present day, within the Colony, a bullock is now substituted for the human victims; though there are valid grounds for supposing that in the remoter districts through which the river flows, the older sacrifice is still made. People living on the northern bank still make the higher offering; and there can be little doubt but that the inhabitants of the villages on the southern bank, separated only by a distance of about 180 feet from the former, also take part in the ceremony.

At Chama, a town at the mouth of the river, a bullock is always specially reserved and fattened for the annual sacrifice, and is called "Prah." The god of the Prah is there supposed to reside in a large rock, near the bar of the river. She is described as being of human shape, but monstrous in size, and as resembling a mulatto in appearance, but with the straight hair of an European.

Before the passage of the Prah by the Ashanti invading army in January, 1873, three women and fourteen men were sacrificed to the god at Prahsu by the chief of Yan-Coomassie Assin, to propitiate him and induce him to prevent the passage of the enemy. A few days later, in attempting to cross the river at Prahsu, some twenty or thirty Ashantis were drowned, amongst them a sub-chief of Bantama; and these

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casualties were attributed, both by the Ashantis and by the Assins, to the action of the god. The Ashantis, accordingly, on their side also offered human sacrifices, and abandoning Prahsu, proceeded about half-a-mile higher up the stream to Attassi, where they crossed without further loss.

Dupuis mentions that after the conquest of Assin, in 1807, thousands of prisoners were sacrificed by the Ashantis to the god of the river Prah; and a song, celebrating the conquest, narrated how a river of blood flowed from Miassa to the Prah, and propitiated the wrath of the river-god. Miassa was the capital of the former kingdom of Assin, north of the Prah.

The chief deities of the undermentioned districts are as follows:

Wassaw. The spirit of the River Ancobra. He is of human size and shape, black in colour, and malignant. Until quite recently human sacrifices were made to him.

Ahanta. The spirit of the River Ahah, to whom the crocodiles of the river are sacred. Human sacrifices were also made to this god until very recently.

Appollonia. The spirit of the River Abu-mehsu, who has been already referred to as the wife of Bobowissi.

Nkwam-fohsu. The spirit of the River Suri-wissu. He is of human shape and size, brown in colour, and malignant. After any loss of life in the river, or destruction of property by flood, human victims are still sacrificed to him.

In the territory between Faisowah and Salt Pond, through which runs the River Amissa-tshi, sometimes called the Amissa and sometimes the Oki, the spirit of the river is the chief god. He is of human shape, but

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monstrous in size and white in colour. Human sacrifices were made to him until within the last few years.

Adansi. The chief god, resides in the Adansi Hills. It is represented as a female, black in colour and monstrous in size. She is malignant and destroys life. At the annual festival termed Adjirrah human sacrifices are still made to her, and such offerings are also made whenever the Adansis have urgent need for her assistance. For instance, human victims, both male and female, were sacrificed here to prevent the British expeditionary force crossing the range of hills in 1874.

In the Commendah District the chief god resides in a hill, about half-a-mile from the old Dutch fort; and the war of 1694, between the Dutch and the Commendahs, was caused by the former attempting to dig the hill in search of gold in spite of the protests of the natives.

Djuabin. The chief god of Djuabin, was the spirit of a river, and was represented by an image, human in shape and black in colour. In 1876, when Djuabin was reconquered by Ashanti, the king and the great majority of his people fled into British territory, taking with them this image, which is now kept at the new town of Djuabin-fufu, founded by the exiles. They propitiated the god before this exodus, and inquired of the priests if he were willing to accompany them. The priests replied in the affirmative; and the Djuabins, in taking the image with them, believed that the spirit of the river, the being who possessed the power to do or avert harm, accompanied it, leaving merely the stream of water behind. The spirit, the river-god, thus having departed, there could not be, according to native ideas,

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any further loss of life in the river; but as deaths by drowning have occurred in it since, the new people dwelling on its banks have been obliged to come to the conclusion that the god did not really quit it, or that if he did, he appointed a subordinate spirit to reside in it.

This removal of a local god to another part of the country is a curious illustration of the extent to which an original idea may become perverted. As will be shown in Chapter XI., all such natural features are believed to possess two individualities, the tangible, and the intangible or spiritual; and it is the latter that is worshipped. Originally these two individualities must have been inseparable. The god of a river could not have been conceived apart from the river. Indeed, they are now regarded as inseparable; but in this case, and also in the case of Kottor-krabah, either through the original idea being lost sight of, or through priest-craft, which latter I think the more probable, they appear to be regarded as separable. The spiritualised river, that is the being who acts and wills, is taken away; and the tangible river, the mere stream of water, remains.

In the gold-producing districts, as for instance at Essaman in Wassaw, the gold is believed to be brought up from the bowels of the earth by a local deity, who thus rewards his people for their worship and for the offerings made to him. The natives dig only for alluvial gold, and their ordinary plan is to sink a circular pit, about six feet in diameter. These pits are frequently from twenty to twenty-five feet deep, and as no attempt is made to shore up the sides, persons

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working in them are not unfrequently buried alive, or smothered by the earth falling in. In such cases the natives make no attempt to rescue their fellows; for they believe that the accident has been caused by the god, who requires the assistance of those he has thus slain to help him to bring up the gold from the depths below; the spirits of persons who have met their death in this way being believed to enter at once upon a career of ghostly servitude to the gold-producing god. The work of bringing up the gold from the interior of the earth is believed to be one of great difficulty, so, by direction of the priests, gold-digging is limited to two or three months in the year, and for the remainder the pits remain undisturbed, to give the god time to bring up more gold. Should the supply prove scanty, the natives usually sacrifice two or three slaves to the god, being satisfied that he is either displeased or underhanded. If the former, the sacrifice will propitiate him; and if the latter, it will provide him with assistants.

It has perhaps been observed that the examples I have given of local deities from Cape Coast, Moree, Elmina, and the remoter districts, show a regular retrogression into barbarism. In Cape Coast we find that there are more gods who are friendly than there are who are malignant, and that in not one case has there been preserved even the tradition of human sacrifices having been offered to those gods who are now worshipped. At Moree and Elmina the malignant gods are more numerous, and the tradition of human sacrifices is preserved; more markedly, however, at Elmina than at Moree. In the remoter districts within the Colony

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nearly all the gods are malignant, and human sacrifices have only ceased within the last twelve or fifteen years. Beyond the Colony human sacrifices are still offered.

In this gradual retrogression we see the inevitable result of the influence of European ideas upon native thought. At Cape Coast, where for four hundred years the natives have been in contact with Europeans, and where, since the beginning of this century, human sacrifices have been positively prohibited, the original conceptions of the local gods have become most modified, and the older ideas lost sight of or corrupted. The inhabitants of Moree and Elmina have been for an equal period in contact with Europeans, but for about two hundred years those towns were Dutch possessions, and the Dutch interfered very little with native customs, even tacitly permitting human sacrifices. As late as 1870, human beings were put to death at Elmina, without any notice of the fact being taken by the Dutch authorities. Moree was placed under British jurisdiction by the exchange of territory which took place on January 1st, 1868, and Elmina became British on April 6th, 1872. In the characteristics of the local deities of these two towns we observe the result of the non-interfering policy of the Dutch. In those districts of the Colony removed from the sea and direct European influence, the inhabitants are in every respect as barbarous as those living beyond the frontier, and their gods are equally barbarous and cruel. The prohibition of human sacrifices has, however, had some appreciable effect upon native ideas; the people are no longer brutalised by scenes of bloodshed and cruelty, and before long we may expect to find a reflection of

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this improved state of affairs in the characters of their gods. Beyond the Colony, matters are as they have been from time immemorial, and the most revolting cruelties are practised without exciting remark.

A regularly descending scale of sacrifice, from human victim to bullock, from bullock to sheep, and from sheep to fowl may also be traced. The Chama god Prah, to which human victims were formerly offered, has now a bullock sacrificed to him; and Behnya, the war-god of Elmina, has descended from human victim to bullock, and from the latter to sheep. Fohsu, at the Salt Pond at Cape Coast, has within a short period descended from sheep to fowl, and sacrifice for Adzi-anim is now included with that for her. Next comes the stage when the separate existence of a god is lost sight of, or when, through some external cause, the worship of a particular god falls into disuse. Of this we have instances in the cases of Djwi-j'ahnu, Kottor-krabah, and Mi-impahno. The gods of the land, whose memory would be less likely to be preserved by fatal accidents recurring at the same spot, are the first to die out under the pressure of European ideas. Hence at Cape Coast the number of marine gods is largely in excess of those of the land. We have no tradition of the former existence of any now-forgotten gods of the sea, whereas we have evidence of the worship of three land gods having become extinct within very recent times; and there were doubtless at one time very many more, whose very names have now been forgotten for years.

Besides the sacrifices made on the various days sacred to local gods, any worshipper who may wish to gain the

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favour of a god, on any particular occasion or for some special purpose, can, with the intervention of a priest, make sacrifice; and the offering is usually proportionate to the urgency of the need of protection or assistance. In addition to such offerings, arrangements are also made for the comfort of these imaginary beings; still, of course, with a view to propitiation. For instance, a country stool may be seen in some shadowy recess of the forest, or under a mass of rock, placed there for the use of the local god; or, raised from the earth on a light platform of sticks, to preserve the contents from animals, earthen saucers and pitchers, full of water for the god to drink, may be observed. As, exposed to the ardent rays of a tropical sun, the water gradually diminishes through evaporation, the natives have, to their minds, ocular demonstration of the existence of the gods, and of their need for drink, and hence for food. The disappearance of water spilled upon the ground, they would explain by saying that the earth soaked it up; but the disappearance of water from vessels that are not porous, they can only account for by the supposition that it has been drunk, or otherwise used, by a spirit. Nor can this idea be easily combated. I endeavoured once to explain to an intelligent native how it was that the quantity of water diminished; but he was incredulous. "If," he said, "the water was drawn up by the sun, why could not one see it going up? One could see water coming down, and rain always fell down. No one had ever heard of rain going up." As far as fluid is concerned, the natives thus have what they consider to be proof of its being used by the gods. With regard to solid food, they believe that the gods make use of the

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spiritual part of it, leaving the material portion behind; for there is a general belief that most, if not all things, possess two individualities, a tangible and an intangible. To this belief I shall refer later on.

On the day sacred to or set apart for the offering of sacrifice to a local god, the inhabitants abstain from all work, smear their bodies with white clay, and wear white cloths in sign of rejoicing. Those who have no white cloths, attire themselves in cloths of a light colour. In the inland districts the women shave the head, and this was formerly the custom with the people of the coast towns also, who have, however, now abandoned it. Indeed, the women living in the towns on the sea-coast now take great pride in arranging and dressing their hair in a variety of modes, and allow it to grow long. This fashion, which is probably in imitation of European women, has perhaps had everything to do with the cessation of the custom of shaving the head. The women of the interior ordinarily appear with the head shaved, a small circular patch of hair on the right side being alone left. On sacred days this patch is also shaved.

The manner of using the white clay for the purpose of marking the body, varies in different localities. The inland peoples—the Ashantis, Adansis, Assins, Denkeras, etc.—mark themselves with streaks. A number of vertical white lines extend from the crown of the head, down the face, neck, and chest, to the abdominal region; and, at right angles to these, are other white lines, drawn across the chest. The outer side of each leg is marked with vertical lines extending from the hip to the ankle; and one long line, crossed by three at right angles, ex-

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tends from the shoulder to the wrist. The Fantis do not make lines. They smear the white clay over the whole body, or cover themselves with white patches or blotches.

The local deities, besides affording protection to those who worship them, will, at the instance of a worshipper, avenge any injury or wrong done to him. Thus, if a man had property stolen from his house, he might go to the priest of the local deity he was accustomed to worship, state the loss that had befallen him, make an offering of a fowl, rum, and eggs, and ask the priest to supplicate the god to punish the thief. In cases of deadly insult or injury, the complainant asks for the death of the person who has wronged him. If, in the case I have supposed, the worshipper afterwards discovered that the theft had been committed by one of his own household, by a mischievous child, or by one of his wives or slaves, he would at once make a considerable offering to the god, and request the priest to beg it to undo any work of punishment it might have commenced. A sheep is usually considered necessary in such a case; the power of a local god, once set in motion, not being lightly stopped.

It is the height of sacrilege to cut down bush or trees, or disturb the soil, in a spot where a local deity resides; and any such act is visited with the anger of the outraged god, who not unfrequently slays those who have violated the sanctity of the spot. In 1885, when the road from Cape Coast to Elmina was being repaired, the labourers, by order of the foreman, who was a Christian, took a quantity of earth from the bluff or headland where Fohsu is believed to reside, and cut

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down some of the bush. Some of her worshippers at once repaired to a priestess of Fohsu, named Konfu Arabah, who was supposed to be more frequently in communication with the goddess than any other member of the priesthood, and who lived at Suru, on the opposite side of the Salt Pond. The priestess appeared inexpressibly shocked. "Great sacrilege had been committed, and Fohsu was deeply angered. Had she been of an unforgiving disposition, like Aynfwa, every one engaged in the sacrilegious act would already be dead, and her people would have been punished for not having interfered to protect her from insult. But she was not relentless, and she, the priestess, would intercede with her. But sacrifices must at once be made, and the fees would be so much."

In 1874, when I was at Secondee, a town in the Ahanta district, I experienced the greatest difficulty in having a tract of bush cut down that was sacred to a local god. The fort was at the time blockaded on the land side by the inhabitants of Dutch Secondee, assisted by a remnant of Amankwa Tia's army, which had been driven westward after the defeat at Elmina; and as the bush extended close up to the walls of the fort, it was absolutely necessary to have it cleared away. Eventually I succeeded in getting it done by some natives of Accra, who formed part of the garrison, and who were, perhaps, less sensitive to local superstition; but an attack of fever, which shortly afterwards prostrated me, was, both by these men and by the inhabitants of the village, at once regarded as a punishment inflicted by the angered god.

In time of war the struggle is not carried on by the

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opposing tribes alone, for the protecting deities of each side are believed also to be contending together, each striving to achieve success for his own people; and they are believed to be as much interested in the result of the war as the people engaged. Victory or defeat is attributed to the success or failure of the tribal deities in their struggle with those of the foe, and, as in the "Iliad," the gods support and assist their favourites. To the native of the Gold Coast the deities of hostile tribes are as much real personages as are those of his own tribe. Generally he believes his own to be the more powerful, so that, were no other considerations brought into play, he ought always to feel assured of victory. But then there is always the possible contingency that his gods may be offended, and may either withhold their assistance or lend it only in a half-hearted manner. Hence it is usual, before commencing a war, to make costly sacrifices to all the tribal gods in order to banish from their minds the trace of any possible offence; and no war is ever engaged in without a favourable response having been obtained from them by the priests. As Professor Huxley has shown,* a belief similar to this existed in Asia Minor at the period covered by the Book of Judges. The Israelites believed Baal, Dagon, and Chemosh, to be just as much real personages as Jahveh; and each different people believed that their gods fought for them.

Each god assists his people in his own manner. A war-god, by stimulating their courage, protecting them from the dangers of war, and destroying the enemy in battle; a god whose special mode of displaying anger is

* "Evolution of Theology." *Nineteenth Century*, March, 1886.

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pestilence, by sending an epidemic amongst the enemy; and a river god, by obstructing the passage of the foe, and by overwhelming him when he endeavours to cross the stream. Thus the god of the Prah, as already stated, influenced by the sacrifices made by the Assins, was believed to have obstructed the passage of the Ashantis at Prahsu, in January, 1873. Prah, however, is not strictly speaking a tribal god. He is worshipped equally by the Assins, Adansis, and Ashantis. Therefore, when the latter in their turn offered a sacrifice superior to that which had been made by their adversaries, he suffered himself to be appeased, and allowed them to pass.

It should be observed that many local deities are unrepresented by any image, or other tangible and material object. More commonly, however, each is represented by an image, in the presence of which all sacrifices are made.

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CHAPTER VII.

DEITIES WORSHIPPED BY PARTICULAR SECTIONS OF THE COMMUNITY (COMPANY, MARKET, TOWN, AND FAMILY TUTELARY DEITIES).

JUST as the gods that I have arranged under Class 2 are very generally believed to have been appointed by those of Class 1, so those of Class 3 are believed to be, or have been, appointed by the gods of Class 2. They may likewise be of either sex. The general name for such deities is also *Bohsŭm*, and they are invariably the tutelary deities of particular sections of the community, such as town companies, market-people, families, etc. It should be observed that the male inhabitants of a town, with those of the villages and hamlets under the jurisdiction of the chief of the town, are divided for military purposes into what are called town companies, each of which has a leader, and the members of which, with their families, reside in distinct localities. The institution of these companies dates from very remote times.

Now in every town each company has its own tutelary deity or deities, which are obtained from and appointed by one of the local deities of Class 2,

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through the agency of a priest. These deities differ materially from those of Class 2, the spirits of the land and sea, which are deified powers in Nature. Those, as we have seen, dwell in rivers or in hills, or in certain portions of the forest or sea. These are their ordinary dwelling-places, and though the god can enter the image made to represent it, and does so when sacrifice is being made before it, or on particular occasions, as when the image of a war-god is carried to battle, yet ordinarily each dwells in his own locality, in his own river, or lagoon, or rock in the sea, or tract of forest. The idol or image is the symbol of a god that resides in the neighbourhood, but not necessarily in the image.

In the case of the deities of Class 3 it is different. The local deities, through the priests, present those who require such tutelary deities with certain objects, and in those objects dwell the tutelary deities. The deity is not supposed to be absolutely and irrevocably confined to the object, but it ordinarily has its abode in it. Thus the material objects in the possession of town companies are not symbols of gods which usually reside elsewhere. Each is the actual receptacle or ordinary abiding-place of an indwelling god.

These objects are frequently, and indeed usually, of the most ordinary and commonplace description. One may be a wooden figure, another a stone, a third a covered calabash, or an earthen pot containing a mixture of earth and blood—no object appears to be so insignificant that it cannot be made, by a local deity, the abode of an indwelling tutelary deity.

At the present day, when the formation of a new

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town company necessitates a new tutelary deity being obtained, the members of the company, or the principal men amongst them, proceed to the priest of a local deity with presents, and acquaint him with their wishes. If the priest be satisfied with what he has received, he goes with them to the river, rock, hill, or portion of the bush in which the local deity resides, and with mysterious sounds and ceremonies communicates with it. He then appoints a day upon which the people are again to meet him, and they return home.

The place of appointment is usually the priest's house; and, on the people there assembling, he commences his operations. He performs a weird dance, foams at the mouth, rolls his eyes, and utters strange sounds, pretending to be possessed by the local god. He then lets fall certain words, which are the instructions that are to be carried out. He is to go to such and such a spot, the abode of the god, and take therefrom a stone, or some of the earth; or he is to make a wooden figure out of the wood of a tree growing there, or something of that kind; and the object selected is to be tied round with *addor*, that is, the filaments drawn from the heart of a sprouting bamboo, and from which the so-called "grass caps" are made.

Accompanied by the people he carries out these supposed instructions, after having poured some rum on to the ground as an offering; and then, dancing before them, and bearing the object which is now believed to be the receptacle or ordinary abode of an indwelling god, he proceeds to that quarter of the town in which the members of the company in question all live. He then indicates the spot where the *Bohsŭm*

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is to be placed, generally in the centre of a broad street, or in some open space. The *Bohsŭm* having been placed on the ground, branches, taken from trees growing near the abode of the local deity, are planted round it, and the whole is enclosed with a neat fence of palm-sticks. These branches are almost invariably taken from a tree called by the natives *jehnjŭm*, and which appears to be a variety of india-rubber tree. The branches are planted so that when they grow they may afford shade for the god; shelter from the heat of the sun being most grateful to man in the tropics, and therefore, the natives reason, also most acceptable to a god.

This is the origin of those so-called "fetish trees," which are found in every town or village amongst the Tshi-speaking tribes; and which many, if not most, observers have supposed to be reverenced or worshipped themselves. Those trees which are not thus planted to overshadow the tutelary deity of a company, are similarly planted to afford shade for the tutelary deity of a market; which latter is obtained from a local deity, through the agency of a priest, in exactly the same way.

Each company in a town has thus its own tree, under which the guardian deity of the company dwells; and only the members of the company may touch the tree, or pluck leaves from it, it being considered as belonging to or sacred to the god. As is to be expected from the reasons which caused them to be planted, these trees are invariably umbrageous and of thick foliage. They are not usually tall or large, being pruned and trimmed so as to grow thickly and

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throw a dense shadow. The spot where the tree is, is called *ehsúdu*, a word which is said to signify "the place of assembly;" and here palavers concerning matters connected with the company are held.

The *Bohsŭm* having been placed on the ground, the branches planted and the fence completed, offerings are made, and the people disperse. The procedure is the same whether the tutelary deity be designed for the protection of a company, or of persons frequenting a market. In the towns on the sea-coast, it is usual for the people, after an interval of some days, to send for a second priest, usually one who resides at some little distance from the first. They inform him that they have lately received a new tutelary deity, and they ask him to tell them how they are to please it, and what day should be set apart as its day. The priest gives them the information they require, and then, to test him, they ask him to say whence the *Bohsŭm* came. As a rule the priests have a secret understanding with one another, and keep each other fully informed of all necessary particulars. Should, however, the priest give a wrong answer; if the *Bohsŭm* had been obtained, say, from Fohsu, and the priest should say it had been obtained from Tahbi, the people would send him away convinced that he was an impostor, and that all the directions which he had given them were false. They would then call in the services of another priest. From this it will be seen that the people who have been subject to contact with Europeans, do not place implicit faith in the utterances of all priests. The information concerning the worship of the *Bohsŭm*, such as where it is to be kept,

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what day is to be kept sacred to it, and what offerings will please it most, is believed to be obtained by the priest from the god itself; it may therefore be regarded as a primitive form of revelation.

From time to time offerings of food and drink, of meat, plantains, yams, palm-oil, and eggs, and of rum and palm-wine, are placed inside the enclosure for the use of the guardian god; and the skulls of sheep, goats, and dogs, with the bones of animals and fowls and fragments of bottles, which one sees inside all such enclosures, are the remains of such offerings. In the case of the tutelary deity of a market, all persons offering articles for sale in the market are bound to make an offering to it out of their goods—a seller of cotton print tearing off some small shreds and throwing them into the enclosure, a vendor of palm-wine pouring out a little of it, and a trader in food-stuffs throwing in small fragments of food.

In time of war, before taking the field, each company assembles at its *ehsúdu*, and the following ceremony is performed. A large bowl or brass basin, filled with water, is set down near the tree, and a priest, after bruising the leaves of a tree called by the natives *ardwim-habban*, puts them into the water, squeezes the sap out of them, and sprinkles the assembled men with the decoction. This operation is intended to render the warriors invulnerable, and, while performing it, the priest invokes the tutelary deity, calling upon him to protect his children who are about to go to battle. The sacrifice of a black fowl then terminates the proceedings.

It may here be observed that on ordinary occasions

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the sacrifices to deities of this class are palm-oil, eggs, or rum. If any special protection for a particular purpose is required, a white fowl is sacrificed. This sacrifice is called *akkor-hin*, a word which seems to be compounded of *ahkokor* (fowl), and *ehin* (chief). To make atonement for any neglect, either voluntary or involuntary, or for any offence given, a black, or black and white, fowl is sacrificed. This sacrifice is called *assŭmtchi*, which seems to mean "to remove all subjects of dispute," and is probably compounded of *assŭm* (speech, words), and *tchia* (to pay). Beyond the colonial boundary, however, sheep, bullocks, and even human victims are sacrificed to tutelary deities, especially during war; and such sacrifices are, at the present day, commonly made by the Ashantis, Gamans, and other remoter tribes. In 1872, when Prince Ansah was detained at Coomassie by the Ashanti king, a Fanti youth in his service, who had accompanied him from Cape Coast, at which place he had acquired a certain amount of scepticism, either in a spirit of bravado, or thinking that he was not observed, took a leaf from a tree sacred to and overshadowing a tutelary deity of one of the town companies of Coomassie. He was at once seized and led away, and would have been at once put to death, as had a short time previously another youth for a similar offence, had not Ansah, with much difficulty, persuaded the king to commute his punishment, and order that a sheep should be sacrificed instead of the offender. In this case the offence was aggravated by the fact of the culprit being a member of a hostile tribe.

Besides differing in genesis from the war-gods

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included in Class 2, the tutelary deity of a company is never carried into battle, nor is it ever removed from the shadow of the tree under which the object in which it resides has been placed. Although such a deity under its shade tree in a village *ehsúdu* may be considered the palladium of the fighting men of the village, a victorious enemy does not, as might be supposed by Europeans, attempt to drive the god away by cutting down or uprooting the tree, or by damaging or destroying the object in which he dwells. On the contrary. Though the entire village might be razed to the ground, and every other shade or food-producing tree destroyed, the tree under which the tutelary deity dwelt would remain undisturbed. Having a firm belief in the power of the god to avenge himself, the conquerors treat it with the same respect as did the villagers; and, by making it offerings out of the spoil they have obtained, endeavour to gain its good-will.

Besides the tutelary deity of a company such as I have described, and which is always provided with a tree for shade, each company has other tutelary deities, each of which is for a special purpose. These also are inanimate objects possessing indwelling spirits. The tutelary deity under the tree is the special protector of the company during war, when he inspires the men with courage, and preserves them from injury. The others, which do not reside under the tree, but are usually to be found in a miniature circular thatched hut, with a conical roof, or in a small house with the drums of the company, protect at other times. One perhaps watches that no quarrel or division takes place between the members of the company; another may watch over them when

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dancing or holding a festival at the *ehsúdu;* and a third may take care of the drums. Each of these minor guardian gods has, as it were, a special duty, and some companies have several of them. They are all obtained in the usual way, from one or more of the local deities, through the agency of the priests.

When a tree, under which a tutelary deity resides, chances to fall, or to be uprooted by a storm, it is believed that the god has withdrawn his protection from the company or market; and such an event is consequently considered highly calamitous. As the people believe that the god could only have deserted them through their having neglected or offended him, they at once send for a priest to discover the neglect or offence, and, if possible, to remedy the evil.

The ceremonies on such occasions occupy some time. For seven days the priest performs his mystic dance, or lies prostrate at the place where the *Bohsŭm*—now a *Bohsŭm* no longer, since the indwelling spirit has departed—formerly was. During this time he holds no communication with any one; but, at the end of the seven days, if his efforts are crowned with success, he tells the people to go to a certain place and there cut fresh branches of the *jehnjŭm.* These are then planted near the spot where the former tree grew; the sacrifice *assŭm-tchi* is made, and the fragments of the fowl are scattered about the new enclosure. In order to make, as it were, a new departure, a new receptacle or dwelling-place for the god is placed inside the new enclosure, and the old receptacle is discarded. Into this new receptacle the guardian god, appeased by the entreaties of the priest and by the sacrifice *assŭm-tchi,* is believed to enter.

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This is the practice at the present day within the Colony, and the same ceremonies obtain beyond the frontier; but the sacrifices are more costly, and human victims are offered. The dwelling-place of the tutelary deity of the market in Coomassie was a large brass basin, into which, after every campaign, a stone was thrown. During the detention of the missionaries Ramseyer and *Kühne* at Coomassie, a boy from Krepe, who had been taken prisoner during Adu Boffo's campaign there, was painted white from head to foot and led to the basin, whilst an orator informed the tutelary deity that in gratitude for his protection during the war, a slave was herewith consecrated to him. From that day the boy belonged to the guardian god, and waited upon him with food, which was freely supplied from the market. It may perhaps be wondered how the tutelary deity of a market could afford protection, during war, to an army operating at a distance; but such a god is the protector of the food supply of his people, and during active operations he watches over their commissariat and provides supplies. On the 6th of January, 1874, the tree which sheltered this deity fell down, and several human victims were at once offered. The occurrence was considered so ominous, that the king, Kwoffi Kari-kari, at once sought to learn from the priests what the prospects of the war then being waged against the Colony might be. The latter had recourse to divination. Two men were pierced through the cheeks with knives, bound to trees in the forest and left to die. The priests declared that if they soon perished Ashanti would be victorious. But the unhappy victims lingered

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long, one not dying till the fifth, and the other till the ninth day.

The tutelary deities of towns are similar to those of companies and markets, and are similarly obtained. Formerly, however, the inland tribes that owed allegiance to Ashanti obtained them from Tando, the chief deity of the northern tribes, though they are now obtained from their own local deities. The tutelary deity of a town has also a shade tree, but in this case the *Bohsŭm* is not placed on the earth under it, but is kept in a miniature hut, close to which the tree is planted.

On the day sacred to the tutelary deity of a company or market, the priests, and the persons whose business it is to minister to the god, appear with their heads shaved and their bodies painted white; but the members of the company or market do not necessarily adopt such outward signs of rejoicing, though they always assemble and make sacrifice. On the day sacred to the tutelary deity of a town, however, all the inhabitants abstain from work, and appear marked with white clay, and attired in white or light-coloured cloths. This difference appears to be due to the fact that the guardian god of a town is considered both more important and more powerful than that of a company.

The tutelary deities of families are also obtained, by means of a priest, from the local deities of Class 2. The tutelary deity of a family is kept by the head of the family, and, at his death, passes into the keeping of the successor to the family stool.* Thus many of

* Among the Tshi-speaking tribes the "family" is not based

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the objects in which such guardian gods are believed to dwell are of some antiquity, they having been carefully transmitted from one generation to another.

When a family grows very numerous and breaks up into two or more sections, that section which has not the guardian god in its keeping has to be provided with another. A tutelary deity may also become necessary in another manner. If, after the death of the head of a family, a series of misfortunes occurs, and in spite of sacrifices made and worship paid the evil remains unmitigated, the priest on being called in to explain the mystery will perhaps say that the god has accompanied the deceased to the lower world, and that consequently the object which was the dwelling-place of the god, is now uninhabited, and the family must obtain a new protector. The procedure in either of these cases is the same as that already described for obtaining a tutelary deity for a company.

Another mode of obtaining family deities is through the intervention of dreams, to which, as is generally known, primitive and uncivilised men attach very great importance. A man may perhaps dream that his deceased grandfather, father, uncle, or other relative, appears to him in a dream, and counsels him to go to a certain spot, and there select a stone, or a portion of a tree, which he is to bring home with him, and guard and reverence as the habitation of a protecting deity for that portion of the family of which he is the head. With their minds full of such ideas, it is easily con-

upon relationship, but on power, and the family of a man consists of those over whom he exercises control, and thus includes the junior branches, as well as slaves.

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ceivable that such dreams may not unfrequently occur. On awaking, the dreamer, firmly convinced that the spirit of his deceased relative has visited him,* carries out the instructions which he believes he has received; and proceeding to the spot indicated in the dream, brings home with him the stone or piece of wood. A priest is then consulted, and is desired to say whether the object in question is a *Bohsŭm*, that is, has an indwelling spirit, or if the dreamer has made a mistake. Usually the priest, for his own purposes, declares that it is, and it is given a name, and receives offerings.

If, after a time, there is no improvement in the family circumstances, if it is less fortunate, or not more fortunate, than before, the members send for several priests or priestesses, or both, and saying that the new *Bohsŭm* has not given the protection or brought the good fortune wished for and expected, request them to ascertain its wishes. The priests naturally invent some reason. Either the *Bohsŭm* has not been treated with sufficient respect, the offerings have not been sufficient, or something has been done which has given offence and needs atonement. The family thereupon effect the necessary reformation; after which, by the ordinary chapter of accidents, they may become for a time freer from the vicissitudes and misfortunes of life. If so, all is well; but, if not, more priests are consulted, with the same results.

Should, however, persistent ill-luck continue, the priests sometimes reconsider their position. With the members of this craft on the Gold Coast there is none

* That is, properly speaking, his *Kra*. See Chapter XI.

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of that assumption of infallibility in religious matters which characterises the members of higher hierarchies. They acknowledge that they are fallible, are liable to err, and to be deceived. They therefore proceed to test the *Bohsŭm*. A fire is lighted, and the *Bohsŭm* is thrown into it. After some time the fire is raked to pieces, and if the object be found to be unconsumed, it is considered a genuine *Bohsŭm*. If, however, it has been burned, ever so slightly, that is considered a proof that it had no indwelling spirit. This test is final, no matter of what material the object is composed. If it be proved a true *Bohsŭm*, renewed offerings are then made to it until the desired change is produced.

Sometimes a priest, when dancing and working himself into a condition of frenzy at an *ehsúdu*, at which places such performances are commonly held, will let fall, for the benefit of some individual standing by, a number of apparently involuntary utterances, to the effect that a deceased relative of the bystander has appeared to him, the priest, and told him to advise his descendant to go to a certain place and take thence a certain object, which is to be regarded as a *Bohsŭm*. The individual at whom these remarks are directed then acts as does a man who is guided by a dream, and a *Bohsŭm* for that portion of the family of which he is the head is thus obtained. The object of the priests in initiating these is to increase and consolidate their power, by keeping such subjects continually before the people. They also receive fees in money or kind for their services on all occasions.

The tutelary deity of a family protects the members of it from sickness and misfortune, and sacrifices are

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also made to it to remove sterility. Should one of the family fall sick, a priest is sent for and the sick person is led before the *Bohsŭm*, to which the priest says, "Here is your son (or daughter) sick, we do not know what to do, show us what will cure him." The priest then directs a certain treatment, which he pretends the god has revealed to him. If it be successful, and as the priests possess considerable knowledge of the medicinal properties of herbs it frequently is, all is well; if not, the priest is again consulted; and, should death ensue, the survivors believe that the deceased has in some way given such offence to the guardian god that it has in anger withheld its protection.

The head of the family is the person who has charge of the tutelary deity, and whose duty it is to attend to its wants. On the day sacred to it all the members of the family wear white or light-coloured cloths and mark themselves with white, and, in the interior, the women shave the head. No work of any kind may be done, and should one of the members of the family be absent on a journey, he must on that day make a halt. The duration of the festival, and the nature of the offerings, naturally depend principally upon the position held by the family or household. Ordinarily one day is considered sufficient, and eggs, fowls, and palm-oil, are the usual offerings. Influential chiefs, however, sometimes extend the ceremony over two or three days, and the festival of the tutelary deity of the family of the late Ashanti king, Kwoffi Kari-kari, used to last ten days, during which fowls and sheep were sacrificed.

The Ashanti dynasty had, and no doubt still has, though there is at present no king of Ashanti, a special

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tutelary deity, which was kept in a wooden chest about fifteen inches square, ornamented with silver mountings and hinges, and with a leather top in the form of bellows. The festival in honour of this deity commenced in the last week of December, and continued for three weeks.

Family tutelary deities are the special protectors of the chastity of the young girls of the family before the age of puberty. It is considered very disgraceful, and also a great misfortune, for a woman not to bear children; and barrenness is, by the natives, commonly believed to be due to the girl having had intercourse with the other sex while still a child and immature. This opinion is probably the result of observation, for the violation of mere children by men is only too common on the Gold Coast. Therefore, to protect young girls until they arrive at the age of puberty, the family tutelary deity appoints to each a subordinate guardian spirit to watch over and protect their virtue. The general name for such a spirit is *Sassŭr*, and it is always supposed to walk behind the girl it is protecting. When the girl reaches puberty the duties of the *Sassŭr* are at an end, and it ceases to accompany her. The *Sassŭr* is commonly referred to as "the one who walks behind." No offerings are made to it, the idea seeming to be that its services are paid for by the sacrifices made to the tutelary deity.

All the deities of Classes 1, 2, and 3, and some of those of Class 4, are supposed to have a great repugnance to women during the period of menstruation, and at such periods a woman may touch nothing

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in a house in which there is a *Bohsŭm;* while in some districts, as in Ahanta, they are not allowed to remain even in the town, but have to go and stay in small huts erected for the purpose in the neighbouring bush. In such districts it is said that women often take advantage of this custom, and, pretending that the period is at hand, go off to the bush and there enjoy the society of their admirers without restraint. The general idea amongst the natives appears to be that women are unclean at such periods, and therefore not fit to approach a god. In ordinary households, where no *Bohsŭm* is kept, they perform their usual domestic avocations as at other times. Persons of either sex who have touched a corpse are also considered unclean, and repugnant to the gods. Purification is effected by washing the part that has been in contact with the dead body.

Sometimes there is found in the enclosure surrounding the tree which is planted for the company, or market, tutelary deity, or in the hut in which the images, stools, and other paraphernalia of the local deity are kept, a snake. No particular species or variety is selected for this purpose, and I have seen six or seven different kinds of snakes in such places, but usually it is a venomous snake. From the presence of snakes in such situations, it has been inferred that the Tshi-speaking tribes are ophiolatrous, but my own observations have not led me to that conclusion. No native would have any reverence or awe for any snake he might chance to find in the forest or in his provision ground, and he would kill it without compunction, just as he would kill any noxious animal.

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Snakes, in the abstract, are neither worshipped nor revered, nor even left unmolested; but those that live in the enclosures or huts appertaining to deities are, to a certain extent, regarded as belonging to the deities, just as are the trees under which the tutelary deities dwell. Thus such snakes may not be molested or injured, but they are no more worshipped than are the trees. In the eastern states tributary to Ashanti, for instance in Okwao, the python is in some few villages reverenced or worshipped; but this *culte* does not appear to be indigenous, and is borrowed from the neighbouring Dahoman people, who, in their turn, appear to have derived it from Whydah.

Although it is possible that the presence of snakes in such places may be a survival of an extinct ophiolatry, it seems more probable, having in view the entire absence of serpent-worship amongst the people at the present day, that they were originally placed in the enclosures or huts by the priests, to add an element of fear to the respect already felt for localities sacred to the gods; and, in later days, to prevent sceptical or Christian natives from interfering with or damaging those structures. Such, at all events, is the result of the belief that such places usually contain venomous snakes, and inquisitive persons always approach them with great caution, although in nine cases out of ten there is no snake at all; it, if there ever was one, having made its escape or died long since. The priests themselves avow that the snake is placed there to keep intruders away from the enclosure or hut, and they assert that it would strike at any person who might lay sacrilegious

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hands upon these structures or their contents. It is also believed by the people that the snake guards the deity from the approach of women at those periods when they are obnoxious to the gods; and that should a woman approach under such conditions, the snake, influenced by the deity, would sally forth and drive her away.

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CHAPTER VIII.

THE TUTELARY DEITIES OF INDIVIDUALS.

NONE of the deities I have so far described, namely, those of Classes 1, 2, and 3, can be communicated with except through the medium of a priest; but with the class I now purpose describing a considerable change takes place. Not only can a layman hold direct communication with the deities of Class 4, but he also can and does procure such deities for himself, without having reference to any priest.

Deities of Class 4 are generally termed *suhman*, plural *ehsuhman*, and, like those of Class 3, they have their ordinary abode in tangible and inanimate objects; but instead of the indwelling spirit in each object having been obtained from and appointed by one of the local gods, each in the fourth class is a subordinate spirit belonging to Sasabonsum. All the deities of the classes already described are believed to have in their following a number of inferior spirits, who are under the control of and dependent upon the deities; and it is from their ranks that the tutelary deities of Class 3 are supplied. Now, in the case of Class 4, it is one of the

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spirits dependent upon Sasabonsum that is believed to enter the inanimate object and become a *suhman;* it being induced to that course by promises of worship and offerings, which are otherwise never made to these subordinate spirits. As I have already stated, Sasabonsum is regarded as the most malicious, vindictive, and cruel of all the superhuman agents worshipped or reverenced by the Tshi-speaking tribes. The inferior spirits dependent upon a deity are supposed to share to some extent the peculiar characteristics of that deity; and hence it is that one of the chief specialities of the deities of Class 4 is the destruction, at the instance of the individuals who worship them, of those persons who may have injured or offended the worshippers.

A person who wishes to obtain a *suhman* proceeds to the dark and gloomy recesses of the forest, where, in or among the *Bombaces*, a local Sasabonsum resides. There, having first poured a small quantity of rum upon the earth as a propitiatory offering, he adopts one of the following courses:

(1). He cuts from a tree a moderately thick branch, which he carves into a rude semblance of the human figure. Usually these figures are simply cylindrical pieces of wood, from ten to fourteen inches in length, and from three to four inches in diameter. Two or three inches from one end, which may be called the top, the stick is notched so as to roughly resemble a neck, and the top is then rounded so as to bear some distant resemblance to a head. The whole, when completed, is like this:

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(2). He takes a stone, or fragment of rock, from the spot, and binds it with *addor*.

(3). He takes the root of a plant or bush growing there, scrapes it, and grinds it into a paste with the blood of a fowl.

(4). He takes some red earth from the spot, and mixes it into a paste with blood or rum.

In the third and fourth cases the preparation is kept in a small brass pan, and the red tail-feathers of a parrot are commonly stuck in the pastes. A *suhman* prepared in one of the last three modes is frequently kept covered with shea-butter, but a wooden figure never.

Having adopted one of these courses, the individual in quest of a *suhman* then calls upon a spirit of Sasabonsum to enter the object which he has prepared, promising to reverence it and to give it offerings. According to most natives, he then picks certain leaves, the juice of which he squeezes upon the object, saying, "Eat this and speak." Then if a spirit has entered the object, in other words, if the latter has become a *suhman*, a low hissing noise is heard. Being thus assured that the spirit is there, the man then puts to it a number of questions. Ought he, the *suhman*, to be kept in a box, or be left unenclosed? Should he be anointed with shea-butter or left dry? And those questions, to which a low hissing noise is heard in reply, are believed to have been answered in the affirmative. This is the common belief of the natives of the Gold Coast, and it is possible that in the stillness of the tropical forest, the grating of one branch against another, the chirrup of a cicada, or the rustling of a

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lizard or snake amongst the dead leaves, might be taken for the responsive hiss of a *suhman.*

The man then returns home, places the *suhman* in the interior of his house, and watches it for three days and nights, occasionally pouring a little rum upon it. Now, if after having thus obtained a tutelary deity for himself, the man finds that things do not go well with him, that he is not more fortunate in his undertakings, and has no greater immunity from ill, notwithstanding that he has made offerings to it and treated it with respect, he arrives at one of the two following conclusions: Either a spirit did not really enter the prepared object and accompany him from the bush; or it is unable or indisposed to afford the protection wished for. In either case he throws away the receptacle he had prepared for the spirit, and recommences *de novo.* But, so great is the fear of giving possible offence to any superhuman agent, that before discarding it he invariably makes some offering to it to avert its anger.

If, soon after having obtained a *suhman,* a man's affairs prosper, or some good fortune befalls him, then is he confident that he has obtained a tutelary deity both able and willing to protect him. A small portion of his daily food is placed upon it, and he gives it a name, such as Cudjo, or Kwamina.

As already stated, one of the special attributes of a *suhman* is the power of being able to procure the death of any person whom its worshipper may wish to have removed; *ehsuhman* are therefore much dreaded by persons who do not possess one, and it is the exception for natives to possess such deities. A man who has a *suhman* in his house, generally keeps it

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concealed in an inner room; fearing that if it were known he had one he would be shunned, or that people might accuse him of working evil with it. On the other hand, the known possessor of a *suhman* is generally treated with respect; and persons are careful to avoid giving him offence, though they avoid entering his house.

The formula for procuring the death of an enemy through the agency of a *suhman*, is said to be as follows: The worshipper of the *suhman* takes three short sticks, calls aloud three times the name of the person he wishes to be killed, and, while so doing, binds the sticks together with *addor*. This is of course done in secret, and the three sticks bound together are laid upon the *suhman*. The desired death will, it is believed, then take place at once or after a lapse of time, according to the wish of the worshipper of the *suhman*, which must be expressed to it. Should it, however, not take place, it is then supposed that the individual has a more powerful *suhman*, or that he has been protected by one of the higher deities. An enemy may also, it is believed, be made mad, by pouring rum upon a *suhman*, and requesting it at the same time to produce that condition.

The day of the week on which the *suhman* was obtained is the one that is kept sacred to it. Offerings are made to it in private, but there is no wearing of white cloth, or other outward demonstration. No work, however, is done on that day. If a man be sufficiently powerful to be able to brave public opinion, he keeps the day sacred to his *suhman* more openly. Thus Kwoffi Kari-kari used to make his *kehteh* (bed)

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band dance round his *suhman*, which was kept in a small box covered with gold and silver plates, every Tuesday. On these occasions he always sacrificed a human victim to it, but such a sacrifice is altogether exceptional, and could only be made by a king.

A *suhman* has usually a number of different articles made for it, through which it can act, and each article has a specific use or purpose. The idea seems to be that a portion of the nature or essence of the *suhman* passes into the article made. These articles are also termed by the natives *ehsuhman*, though they are distinct from *ehsuhman* proper, and appear to partake rather of the nature of charms or talismans. To this similarity of designation is due much of the confusion which prevails concerning native ideas on religious matters. So far I have only used the term *suhman* as meaning the object or receptacle into which a spirit of Sasabonsum is believed to have directly passed from its former habitat in the forest; and I propose so to continue, designating the particular objects through which a *suhman* can act for a particular purpose as "charms." These charms are many in number, and the following are some of those most commonly met with:

(1). Small pieces of twig, tied up to resemble miniature bundles of brushwood and suspended over a door or window, prevent a thief entering the house.

(2). A seed, called by the natives *entéh*, pierced with a hole and hung up over the door of a house, prevents people talking scandal about the inmates.

(3). A corn-cob, baked in a fire, bound with

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addor and hung up in a doorway, prevents an enemy entering the house.

(4). The root of a certain plant, scraped, dried, and threaded on a string with white beads, protects the wearer from injury, and also makes him bold and outspoken. In an emergency the wearer bites off and chews a small piece of the root.

(5). Three feathers of a parrot or clock-bird tied together with *addor*, enable the indwelling spirit of the *suhman* itself, or a portion of its nature or power, to accompany the person carrying the feathers. It is not clear whether in this case the indwelling spirit itself changes altogether for a time its ordinary place of abode, or if only a portion of its power passes into the feathers. That is to say, it is not clear whether the three feathers tied with *addor* become for a time a *suhman*, or are only a charm. The ideas of natives vary considerably upon such matters, and it is difficult to arrive at any satisfactory conclusion.

To the portion of the power or nature of a *suhman* which has entered a charm, small quantities of food and drink are also offered; and it would almost appear as if such charms were to a *suhman* what the inferior spirits, dependent upon and belonging to a higher deity, are to it. The offering, whether of food or drink, is always placed on the charm. For instance, a native who has a charm with him, will, when given a glass of rum, take a mouthful and, raising the charm to his lips, discharge some of the rum upon it.

It will naturally have occurred to the reader that

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a belief in charms, very similar to the foregoing, still lingers in England. The horse-shoe, for instance, nailed to a door, performs the same office as does the bundle of twigs; and amulets of various kinds were until very recently believed to protect their wearers, just as the dried root is still believed to do on the Gold Coast. It is possible that such lingering superstitions may be survivals of a form of belief analogous to that now existing amongst the Tshi-speaking tribes, and there may have been a time when offerings were in England made to such charms in return for the protection they granted.

The possessor of a *suhman* can make any number of charms, either for his own use or for his neighbours; the efficacy of the *suhman* not being supposed to be the least impaired, no matter how often its nature or power is thus drawn upon to supply other objects. Supposing such a man to have the charm which protects the house from thieves, and to have enjoyed a long immunity from theft, then others in the village, attributing this immunity to the charm, will pay him to obtain from his *suhman* similar charms for the protection of their own property. Thus, though there are few *ehsuhman* proper there are a very great number of charms, and the longer such are kept the more efficacious they are believed to become.

It might perhaps be supposed that the worshipper of a *suhman* would not trouble himself much about the higher deities, since he possessed for himself alone a powerful protector. This, however, is not so. The native idea seems to be that there is a regularly ascending scale of power, commencing with the

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charm and culminating in the deities of Class 1. Consequently, to have gained the favour and protection of a *suhman* would avail nothing if one of the higher deities were inimical. Hence the latter have also to be served and propitiated. Moreover, the most important function of the *suhman* appears to be to work evil against those who have injured or offended its worshipper; its influence in other matters is very secondary, and it does not protect from sickness, injury, or peril, as effectually as does one of the higher gods. Thus, although the possessor of a *suhman* may ordinarily be content to worship it alone, yet, immediately any misfortune occurs or threatens, distrusting either the power of his *suhman*, or his capability of properly interpreting its wishes or gaining its favour, he has recourse to a priest for assistance, and asks his intervention with the deity he serves.

An instance of how thoroughly the natives believe in the power of a person to cause death through a *suhman*, is given by Cruickshank in his "Eighteen Years on the Gold Coast." A native of Akim summoned a woman before Mr. Cruickshank, and charged her with having caused the death of several of his relations. It appeared that the woman and her family were the slaves of an Akim chief. The latter died, and a local deity which was consulted as to the cause of death, declared through a priest, that it had been caused through this woman by means of a *suhman*. She was in consequence seized and sentenced to death; but contrived to escape from her bonds, and fled, carrying her *suhman* with her. Some time afterwards she was met in another district by a member of the family of the deceased chief, and this

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man assaulted her, cursing her for having killed the chief, and knocked her *suhman*, which she was carrying, off her head. The woman escaped from her assailant, and, enraged at the treatment she had received, she poured an offering of rum on to her *suhman*, and invoked its wrath upon the assailant's family. Since that time, said the complainant, six members of the family, of which he was the head, had died, and a seventh was then in a moribund condition. He attributed these misfortunes to the woman, who had procured them through her *suhman;* and he pleaded that she might be given up to him, in the first place, as his slave, and in the second place, that he might take away from her the *suhman*. Says Cruickshank: "Nothing could exceed the earnestness with which he pleaded his cause, and the superstitious terrors under which he was labouring were evidenced in the tremor of his accents, and in the heavy drops of perspiration which rained down from his face."

The woman acknowledged that she was the slave of the complainant, and that her daughter and four children were still slaves in his household. She also admitted having invoked her *suhman* to destroy her master's house. She did not deny that she believed the misfortunes of his house to be owing to the power of her *suhman*, and there was visible in her manner an air of satisfied triumph at this proof of its power. Mr. Cruickshank decided that the *suhman* should be taken from the woman, but that she should be free. She begged hard not to be deprived of it, while the complainant was not satisfied with the mere deprivation. He required it to be delivered to him, so that he might carry it back to his house, and there appease its wrath by worshipping it

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and sacrificing to it. He believed that unless he had an opportunity of propitiating it, he and all his family would inevitably perish.

Advantage was taken of this anxiety on the part of the complainant, to obtain the freedom of the woman's family, and he was told that the *suhman* would be delivered to him when the slaves were restored free. He eagerly consented, but the woman preferred her *suhman* to her family, and it was only by compulsion that she relinquished it. As says Cruickshank, some idea may be formed of how powerful a hold this superstition has upon the natives, when a man was induced to part with five slaves, and travel a distance of more than a hundred miles, to obtain possession of the *suhman*, and a woman was found to value it more highly than the freedom of her family. The *suhman* was brought into Court carefully covered with a white cloth, which, on being removed, disclosed to Mr. Cruickshank a brass pan, containing what appeared to him to be a lump of red earth with parrots' feathers stuck in it. It was doubtless a *suhman* that had been prepared after the fourth manner I have described.

Throughout these beliefs can be traced that widespread belief that the possession of something belonging to an individual gives one a certain power over that individual, or enables him to act on behalf of or according to the wishes of the possessor. Thus to enable a subordinate spirit dependent upon a local god to enter an inanimate object and become a deity of Class 3, the object must be taken from the habitat of the local god; it must be something appertaining to it. So, too, in

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the case of a *suhman*, where the object entered by the subordinate spirit of a Sasabonsum must be taken from the habitat of a Sasabonsum. The same idea will be found to reappear in the manner of taking oaths, and in the tenth chapter there is an instance of it given in a mode of making a preparation to procure the death of an enemy. The habit, which yet lingers in Europe, of burning nail-parings, is doubtless due to this prevalent belief; and amongst some African tribes, for instance the Kru, a man's name is always concealed from all but his most immediate relatives, and to other persons he is always known by an assumed name.

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CHAPTER IX.

DEDUCTIONS.

CONCERNING the three varieties of deities which I have grouped under Classes 1, 2, and 3, the general belief amongst the natives of the Gold Coast appears to be that the third class emanated from the second, and the second from the first. In fact, as has already been shown, new deities of the third class can be and are obtained from those of the second class, through the agency of the priests; and the deities of the second class are believed to have been similarly appointed by those of the first class. This, however, is, I think, doubtful. It appears the more probable, having regard to the fact that the deities of the second class are almost invariably deified powers in Nature, that Bobowissi and Tando were originally of the second class themselves, and that at some subsequent period, from causes which perhaps can never now be satisfactorily discovered, they became, in the minds of the natives, gradually elevated to a superior position.

In discussing this point I propose leaving out of consideration altogether the god Nyankupon, who is simply a European conception thinly disguised, and is

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not, properly speaking, a native deity at all. In the case of Srahmantin and Sasabonsum, whom I have placed in an intermediate position between the first and second classes, it is just possible that the numerous local deities known by these names may all be corruptions of two more original ideas, just as the various deities known under the name of Prah are, I believe, corruptions of a belief in one original god of the Prah. But it seems more probable that, like the Akum-brohfo, they are each a variety of god, differing from other local deities by their exceptional and peculiar modes of manifesting their power and malignancy, just as the Akum-brohfo manifests his against the white race alone. At the present time both Srahmantin and Sasabonsum are, in each locality, local gods; so that, supposing the deities, purely native in origin, to be arranged in order of area of worship and power, we should have in the first class Bobowissi and Tando alone.

My reasons for supposing that these two were originally only deities of the second class are as follows: The deities of Class 3 are appointed by those of Class 2, and their number can, through the agency of the priests, be increased indefinitely; but although those of Class 2 are believed to have been originally appointed by Class 1, no native, whether priest or layman, supposes that Bobowissi or Tando can now increase their number. There comes, therefore, a break in the manner of genesis of these deities. Class 2 can produce or appoint any number of Class 3, but Class 1 cannot produce or appoint any more of Class 2. In fact, such an addition would necessitate the production of some new natural feature, the sudden appearance of a new river, lagoon,

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hill, or rock in the sea. It is true that in the case of Brahfo we have one instance of the appointment by Bobowissi of a new god of Class 2; but, apart from the fact that this was the result of priestcraft, the name itself, "deputy," shows that this god was originally dependent upon Bobowissi, deriving his power from him, and so was not in the same condition as the other gods of Class 2.

Although I have not referred to it in the chapter dealing with the third class of deities, tradition asserts that in former times the tutelary deities of newly-formed town companies were obtained from Bobowissi or Tando, and it is well known that at the present day families who are able to defray the cost of so long a journey sometimes send to Winnebah Hill to obtain tutelary deities from Bobowissi; while the inhabitants of Winnebah and its neighbourhood obtain nearly all their deities of the third class from him, of course in the ordinary way, through the priests. Therefore it appears that Bobowissi, as far as the appointment of new deities is concerned, is exactly on the same footing with those of Class 2: he and they can both appoint members of Class 3. But if Bobowissi belonged to a distinct and superior grade, we might reasonably expect him to appoint deities of the grade next below his, namely, of Class 2.

Although the deities of the fourth class differ in character and attributes from those of the third, and those of the third differ most materially from those of the second, there is no such marked difference between the last-named and those of the first class. Both reside in natural features, both are represented by images, and

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both are worshipped in the same manner. Both are believed to be of human shape. Tando and Bobowissi, like Tahbi and others, have each a wife.

For these reasons, therefore, I think that Tando and Bobowissi in early times were merely deities of the second class; which order of deities I take to be the most original conceptions of the negro of the Gold Coast upon religious matters. Finding himself constantly threatened by dangers, exposed to miseries, and thwarted or obstructed in his designs or intentions by causes over which he had no control, he conceived all these misfortunes to be the acts of inimical or malignant beings, and so mentally peopled the earth with superhuman agents. Long after this, when his social organisation had become so far developed that there were ruling classes and classes ruled, he might, and probably did, extend his own social system to these agents; and, unable to imagine a condition of affairs in which there was no chief, head-man, or other ruler, supposed some of these superhuman agents to be the rulers over the others. Perhaps, even from the commencement all the superhuman agents were not considered as being absolutely equal, as being possessed of exactly the same power of doing harm. Even in very primitive communities, the difference in character, physical strength, and stature between individual men, would probably lead them to suppose similar differences to exist amongst the gods. But if not, the recurrence of disasters, accidents, or obstructions at certain fixed localities, as, for instance, in rivers, would at all events lead the negro to come to the conclusion that some of the gods were more malignant than others. Hence more respect would be paid

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to them, and more offerings, or higher offerings, be made; with the result that in course of time they would be considered of more importance and more powerful. Thus we find that in each locality at the present day there is one god of the second class who is believed to be superior to the other gods of the locality. It is, moreover, worthy of note that such superior local gods are almost always river-gods.

As an instance of how much the native ideas upon the nature and characteristics of their gods are influenced, if not governed, by their own customs and social organisation, we find that Abu-mehsu, the wife of Bobowissi, is never regarded as the equal of Bobowissi; just as in their own social system the wife, who occupies a position between that of a servant and a slave, is never regarded as the equal of her husband. Thus Abu-mehsu, though the wife of the principal god of the southern tribes, and now looked upon by many as the mother of all the gods of the second class, is herself only regarded as belonging to that class; and the people of Winnebah, alone of those living beyond the locality where Abu-mehsu dwells, send to offer her sacrifice and do her honour, because, living under the direct and immediate protection of Bobowissi, they think to please him by showing respect to his wife. Thus a man will sometimes seek to gain the favour of a chief by ingratiating himself with his head wife.

The deified powers in nature, the rivers and lagoons, being necessarily local, would in course of time, from at first being merely regarded as the gods of the district, come to be regarded as the gods of the people dwelling in the district. In this way would probably arise the

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idea of national or tribal gods, so that, eventually, the gods, instead of being regarded as being interested in the whole of mankind, would come to be regarded as being interested in separate tribes or nations alone. Thus the chief god of Djuabin, when his people were defeated by the Ashantis and compelled to seek another home, consented to quit his river and to accompany them. Hence, when the idea was formed that there were rulers amongst the gods as well as amongst men, there would be a supreme god for each tribe; and should several tribes coalesce or combine for mutual defence, or through community of interests, one out of the several tribal supreme gods would probably come to be regarded as the supreme god of the combined tribes. Thus on the Gold Coast we find Tando the supreme god of the northern tribes, and Bobowissi of the southern, and any tribe that may secede from these combinations has naturally to adopt the worship of the supreme god of the combination to which it goes over.

The events which led to the elevation of Bobowissi above the other gods of the southern tribes can probably never now be ascertained. It was perhaps due to great catastrophes which may have occurred at the spot where this god is now believed to reside, or to local characteristics, or to priestcraft alone. We have seen in the case of Brahfo how superior priestcraft led to that god being considered superior to all the local gods of Fanti proper; and, but for the untoward events which led to his worship falling into discredit, it is not improbable that at the present day we might have found him the supreme god of the Fantis. It might even have happened that Brahfo would have in course of time altogether eclipsed Bobowissi, and the latter have subsided

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into an ordinary local deity. I am rather inclined to think, however, that the local natural features led to the selection of this god for the chief honour. Winnebah Hill, in which Bobowissi dwells, is certainly the most remarkable natural feature in that portion of the Gold Coast inhabited by the southern tribes. It also possesses a marked echo, which phenomenon, as is well known, has always been attributed by primitive tribes to a superhuman being.* The elevation of Tando to a superior grade is probably due to the fact that his river is by far the largest in that part of the interior.

Once a god was raised in the minds of the natives to a position superior to the other gods, catastrophes and calamities which were generally felt and not limited to any special locality, would be attributed to him. He, too, would become the wielder of the lightning and the lord of the storm. This attribute, together with the power of inflicting pestilence, famine, and flood, has in all ages and in all systems, been the special characteristic of the chief god of the system. We have an instance of such a transfer of powers in the case of the god of Nyankupon, to whom the natives of the sea-coast towns, as soon as they imagined him to be more powerful than Bobowissi, transferred all the above special attributes, which had formerly been Bobowissi's; and should the conception of Nyankupon progress amongst the northern tribes, we may in course of time expect to see Tando equally stripped.

Thus, if my contention be correct, that the deities of the second class are types of the original conception

* "Echo" is in Tshi, *jihjeh*, and is derived from *jihjih*, to tempt or entice.

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of the Negro of the Gold Coast, then from that starting-point the Negroes have both progressed and retrograded. Progressed when they formed the conception of semi-supreme deities, such as Tando and Bobowissi, and retrograded when, through the agency and probably at the instance of the priesthood, they came to believe in the existence and power of tutelary deities of the third and fourth classes. On the one hand they reached the confines of monotheism, and on the other they descended to those of fetishism.

It has already been stated that none of the heavenly bodies are worshipped by the Tshi-speaking tribes, but, from the fact that the Tshi equivalent for "moon," *Bohsŭm*, is the name by which deities of the second and third classes are generally known, and from the etymology of that word, it may be inferred that there was a time when the moon was reverenced, or regarded as a god. No such trace, however, of sun-worship can be discovered. The Tshi word for "sun" is *ehwia*, from *wia* (to creep, crawl, or move slowly), and its literal meaning is "the creeper," perhaps so named from its apparently slow progress across the heavens. From this it would seem that moon-worship takes precedence of sun-worship, and it certainly appears more probable that primitive man would be more impressed by the, to him, erratic appearance and varying phases of the moon, than by the constant and regular recurrence of the sun. But although he might thus at first regard the moon with awe, he would soon learn to know when its appearance might be expected; and then, finding himself neither obstructed nor thwarted by it, would cease to pay as much regard to it as to those sublunary natural powers

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which affected him more nearly. Thus all reverence for the moon might gradually die out, until, as in the case in point, the only trace remaining of such former reverence would be in the name.

The Tshi name for the stars is *woh-rabbah*, from *woh* (to breed, multiply, be fruitful), and *abbah* (children, or little ones). They were probably so named on account of their number.

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CHAPTER X.

THE PRIESTHOOD.

Amongst peoples who have spiritualised nature to such an extent as to attribute every unusual or unfortunate event to the action of superhuman beings, occurrences even the most trivial naturally come to be believed to possess a special significance. They are, in fact, prognostications, foreshadowings of future events, generally of ill-fortune; they are signs given by the superhuman beings. To interpret these signs, to understand the wishes or intentions of these beings, and hence to conciliate them, becomes a matter of the highest importance, for on it depends the entire well-being of man. Persons are therefore set apart to study this art. In this manner arises a priesthood, and priestcraft, extending in course of time the legitimate functions of the priesthood, soon interferes in almost all the affairs of life.

Originally, perhaps, all persons equally attempted to interpret the signs, to fathom the wishes of the deities; but before long it must have happened that some men, more fortunate or more cunning in their predictions, must have acquired a local celebrity in the art. Such

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men would soon be consulted by their neighbours, pupils or apprentices would be attached to them so that the art might be preserved; and thus would be gradually formed a special class, which would assume the functions of intermediaries between the people and the gods.

On the Gold Coast the knowledge of the mysteries of the gods and their service is transmitted from generation to generation of priests; and the number of the latter is constantly being recruited by persons who voluntarily devote themselves, or who are devoted by their relatives or masters, to the profession. Men, women, and even children, can thus become members of the priesthood; but a long novitiate is necessary, generally from two to three years, during which the novices live in retirement, and are instructed by the priests in the secrets of the craft. This knowledge is, of course, imparted gradually, the most unimportant rites and secrets being revealed first, and then, as the novice proves himself worthy of confidence, the more important; but it does not appear that anything which would not bear inspection is revealed to children, who are only thoroughly initiated when they have grown up. The people believe that, during this period of retirement and study, the novices must keep their bodies pure, and refrain from all commerce with the other sex.

If a mother has been so unfortunate as to have had several of her children die, it is not uncommon for her to make a vow to devote the next born to the service of the gods, hoping thereby to preserve its life. Under such circumstances the child when born is set apart for the priesthood, and on arriving at maturity generally

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fulfils the vow made by his mother and becomes a priest. Should, however, he feel any repugnance to such a course, a sacrificial offering made to the deity to whose service he was destined is sufficient to release him.

Dancing is a special branch in the education of a priest or priestess. They must be very proficient in the art, and they are taught privately by adepts for many months before they are allowed to perform in public. The dance is always performed to the sound of drums, and it is during it that a priest is possessed by a god, and lets fall oracular utterances. By the violence of the exercise they work themselves into a state of extreme excitement, and, staggering hither and thither, with eyes rolling and mouth foaming, appear to be lost to all consciousness of their actions.

Priests marry like any other members of the community, and purchase wives; but priestesses are never married, nor can any "head money" be paid for a priestess. The reason appears to be that a priestess belongs to the god she serves, and therefore cannot become the property of a man, as would be the case if she married one. This prohibition extends to marriage only, and a priestess is not debarred from sexual commerce. The children of a priest or priestess are not ordinarily educated for the priestly profession, one generation being usually passed over, and the grandchildren selected.

Priestesses are ordinarily most licentious, and custom allows them to gratify their passions with any man who may chance to take their fancy. A priestess who is favourably impressed by a man sends for him to her

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house, and this command he is sure to obey, through fear of the consequences of exciting her anger. She then tells him that the god she serves has directed her to love him, and the man thereupon lives with her until she grows tired of him, or a new object takes her fancy. Some priestesses have as many as half-a-dozen men in their train at one time, and may, on great occasions, be seen walking in state, followed by them. Their life is one continual round of debauchery and sensuality, and when excited by the dance they frequently abandon themselves to the wildest excesses. Such a career of profligacy soon leaves its impress upon them, and their countenances are generally remarkable for an expression of the grossest sensuality.

The priests are said to be very licentious also, but social considerations oblige them to be so less openly than the priestesses. A priestess can send for any man to live with her, but a priest cannot equally send for any woman. The reason is that women before marriage are the personal property of their parents, and after marriage of their husbands; thus should a priest openly intrigue with a woman he would be infringing somebody's rights. The men, too, are very jealous of any unauthorised interference with their women, and would never submit to any such privilege being claimed by the priest as is exercised by the priestess. In the case of the latter, the temporary possession of a man trespasses upon nobody's rights; for, even if the man be married, his wife has not an exclusive right to him, such as he has to her.

The general designation for a priest is *soffo*, a word which is perhaps compounded of *sow* (to dance) and *fo*

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(a person). The terms *konchini*, *konfu*, and *konfweh*, are also used as titles of respect, and appear somewhat equivalent to "prophet." Priests must ordinarily eat neither flesh nor fowl, and their usual diet is fish and vegetable; but even from the former they must on certain days abstain. There are no different grades of priests, and no priest or priestess has, as such, any authority over another. Some are believed to be better able to interpret the wishes of the gods than others, and so are regarded as greater by the laity; but their mutual interests suffice, without any disciplinary organisation, to preserve perfect accord and agreement amongst them.

Priests and priestesses are readily distinguishable from the rest of the community. They wear their hair long and unkempt, while other people, except the women in the towns on the sea-board, have it cut close to the head. They also wear round the neck a long string of alternate black and white beads, which descends nearly to the waist. They generally carry with them a stick from three to four feet in length, to which, about the middle, are bound, parallel to it and on opposite sides, three short sticks, from three to four inches long. These latter, and the adjacent parts of the long stick, are daubed with the yolk and albumen of eggs, with pieces of the shell left adhering. Very commonly priests wear a white linen cap, which completely covers the hair, and a similar cap is sometimes worn by priestesses, but only when they are about to communicate with a god. Frequently both appear with white circles painted round the eyes, or with various white devices, marks, or lines painted on the face, neck, shoulders, or arms. While ordinary people

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wear, when their means permit, cloths of the brightest colours and most tasteful patterns, the priesthood may properly only wear plain cloths of a dull red-brown colour, and which are so dyed with a preparation called *abbin*, made from the bark of the mangrove tree (*abbin dwia*), and with which fishermen tan their nets. On holy days and festivals, however, they appear arrayed in white cloths, and on special days with their bodies covered from head to foot with white clay. The costume of a priest or priestess, when professionally engaged in the dance, consists of a short skirt reaching to the knee, and made, in the interior districts, of woven grass or *addor*, on the sea-coast of cotton print. At such times, too, they always carry in the hand a short brush made of reeds.

Priests and priestesses are paid considerable sums for their services, and no person could consult either without first giving a handsome present. They are applied to for information and assistance in almost every concern of life—to detect the person who has caused the death of another, to expose the thief, the adulteress, and the slanderer, to avert misfortune, and to procure good luck. Appeals are also made to them by persons accused of having procured the death or sickness of others, to be relieved of the false imputation. In their anxiety to secure the services of the priesthood, persons frequently reduce themselves to absolute penury; and cases have been known in which individuals have enslaved themselves, in order that they might obtain a sufficient sum wherewith to purchase a priest's aid. The missionaries Ramseyer and Kühne have left on record a

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fee paid by Kwoffi Kari-kari to the priests, for consulting the gods concerning the probable results of his expedition to the coast. It consisted of £81 in gold-dust, 20 loads of salt, 20 goats, 20 sheep, 70 bottles of rum, and 50 slaves. If the gods granted victory, a thousand additional slaves were promised.

No person can hold any communication with the deities of the first, second, and third classes, except through the priesthood. A man who may wish to obtain some information, say from the tutelary deity of his family, consults a priest, and the latter fixes a day on which he will obtain it. As the influence which the priesthood possess over the credulous and superstitious people is chiefly kept up by the frequent exhibition of their powers, nothing is done in private. On the day fixed, the priest proceeds perhaps to the *ehsúdu* of the company to which the man belongs, covered with white clay, arrayed in a white cloth, and bearing a reed brush. There he suddenly pretends to be convulsed, and the by-standers conceive that the god has taken possession of him. The drums strike up, and the priest commences his dance, leaping, bounding, and turning and twisting round and round, until he works himself into a real or simulated condition of frenzy, with foam dropping from the mouth, and eyes wildly rolling. By christianised natives it is asserted that substances are placed in the mouth to produce froth, and it is said the skin of an egg is so used. While thus dancing he lets fall from time to time certain remarks, which are regarded as the utterances of the god; and from them the person who sought his services forms his own conclusions. If,

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during his performance the priest should fall down, it is imagined that a second god has entered him, and is engaged in a struggle with the first.

Usually, when required to give information concerning future events, the priests are careful to make their utterances sufficiently ambiguous to admit of a variety of interpretations, so that whatever may happen, they can claim to have foretold it correctly. Sometimes, however, it happens that in an unguarded moment, or in the excitement of the dance, they make predictions which are clear and distinct. At other times, too, they are compelled to this course, by being required to obtain from the gods a plain affirmative or negative answer to a question. Now, although in such cases they naturally predict that which they think will most probably come to pass, yet it not unfrequently happens that the event proves them to have been wrong; and it is the comparative frequency of such occurrences that has raised in the minds of the people a suspicion that all professed priests are not really inspired persons, that the gods find some of them unworthy of possession, if indeed they are not some of them impostors who have adopted the profession for material considerations. Hence, when engaged in any religious matter of importance, as when obtaining a tutelary deity of Class 3, they have recourse to two priests, who are consulted separately, and the statements of the one are checked by those of the other. But as the priests are all in league to deceive and impose upon the people, they usually take care to keep each other well informed upon such matters, so that it is a

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rare occurrence for the utterances of one to disagree with those of another.

When the predictions of a priest are falsified by future events, he commonly endeavours to exculpate himself by asserting that the god who inspired him was annoyed by some offence or neglect, and consequently had made him predict falsely to punish the people. At other times they will assert that a more powerful god than the one who was consulted has been propitiated and engaged by an adversary, and that he has nullified the efforts of the first. The people, however, do not always accept such explanations, they prefer that which seems to them most probable, namely that the priest has lied on his own account, and in the Colony they proclaim him an impostor, while beyond the border a priest frequently pays forfeit with his life for a false prediction. Thus during the Ashanti war of 1873-4, a priest in the camp which the Ashantis had formed in Appollonia, on the north side of the lagoon behind Chief Blay's town, being required to say when a gunboat which was lying off that town would put to sea, declared that it would do so next day. Sunrise next morning, however, disclosed two additional vessels of war, which had arrived during the night, and the unfortunate priest was beheaded "to encourage the others."

Everything which has a tendency to increase the belief of the people in the power of the priesthood to communicate with the gods, is carefully studied. For this purpose the priests gather all the information they can obtain concerning the past history of every

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family in their district, and then from time to time they astonish those who come to consult them, by allusions to past events, to family secrets, or to circumstances attending the career of some ancestor, all of which information the priest then avers he obtained from a god. This course having now been carried on for some time, probably for centuries, and the information obtained by past generations of priests having been transmitted to their successors, it frequently happens that they possess a more intimate acquaintance with the history and genealogy of a family than the members of the family itself; who, when they afterwards discover that what the priests told them of their ancestors was true, are more than ever confirmed in their belief in the power of the priests as the agents of the gods.

Amongst other things the priests also study sleight-of-hand, and, it is said, ventriloquism; while they have acquired a knowledge of the medicinal properties of various herbs, which materially assists them in the maintenance of their imposture. All being united to deceive the people, they are careful to assist each other, and to make known anything that may be generally useful. They send to one another information of what is taking place, what people are likely to come to seek their services, and for what purpose. Sometimes a priest will inform an applicant that the god he serves refuses to accord the information or assistance required, and will recommend him to go to another priest, to whom in the meantime he has communicated every particular; and on consulting this second priest the applicant is much astonished to find that he knows,

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without being told, the purpose for which he has come.

Novices, after their period of retirement and study for the priesthood, are not, as a matter of course, at once accepted by the people as persons duly qualified to act as intermediaries between themselves and the gods, but have to submit to various tests to prove their efficiency. This is done partly perhaps to prevent imposition, and this reason especially holds good in the sea-coast towns, where the natives are becoming rather sceptical; but principally because it is not all persons who may wish to devote themselves to the service of the gods, who are found worthy by the gods. Thus, although all might have been fully trained, the people imagine that there may be some among them who have not proved themselves fit, and whom, therefore, the gods will not inspire. Consequently ceremonies to test their powers are instituted, and these last perhaps a month. First they are, it is said, tested by fire, and afterwards they have to show in public that a god does consider them worthy of inspiration and possession, by becoming possessed and by making predictions which time proves to be correct.

I was once fortunate enough to witness the ceremony which is usually held when a number of novices have been initiated. In the autumn of 1883, and the spring of 1884, several deaths occurred amongst the families of No. 4 Company at Cape Coast, which company is considered to be under the special protection of Fohsu, the deity of the Salt Pond, from whom all the tutelary deities of the company are obtained. Only being able to come to the conclusion that these deaths

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were due to the displeasure of Fohsu, the people sought to know how they had offended her, and how she might be mollified. A priestess; named Konfu Arabah, who lived on the verge of the Salt Pond, near the village of Suru, called by the English "Cocoa-nut Village," was the high priestess of Fohsu; that is, she was supposed to be more frequently in communication with Fohsu, and to be better able to interpret her wishes, than any other priest or priestess. To this woman the people of No. 4 Company applied, and they were told that they had neglected their duty, that there were no priests or persons devoted to the service of the gods in that company, and that this neglect must be remedied. Five or six lads and young men, six or seven women, and some young children, were accordingly supplied from the families of No. 4 Company, and were handed over to Konfu Arabah to be instructed in the service of the gods. They were sent to Kapro, a village on the Kakum, or Sweet River, about four miles to the north-west of Suru; and there they remained in retirement, being visited from time to time by Konfu Arabah, who gradually initiated the women into the business of priestcraft, while a priest at Kapro instructed the males.

In March, 1886, after a two years' novitiate, the education of the novices was declared by Konfu Arabah to be complete. On the 9th of that month she sacrificed and danced at Suru; and, during her inspiration, declared that the third day would be propitious for the return of the new priests and priestesses. On the 12th, accordingly, they were escorted from Kapro by the people of No. 4 Company. The men were all fully

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armed, and a continuous roar of musketry, combined with singing and the beating of drums, was kept up. The new priests and priestesses were taken down to a spot near the beach, behind the market at Cape Coast, which was the place at which offerings to the tutelary deities of the company had in former times been made, and here a sheep was sacrificed and the blood sprinkled around.

Next day, the 13th, the first ceremony for testing the new members of the priesthood was held in that suburb of Cape Coast known to Europeans as Freetown or Brick-town, and to the natives as Forhudzi. The drums of No. 4 Company were taken out there, accompanied by hundreds of people, who formed up in a kind of hollow square, all facing inwards. In the inner rank of this square were the new priests and priestesses, seated upon country stools. The whole surface of their bodies, with the exception of the lips, eyes, eyebrows, and crown of the head, was smeared with some white substance, which, from its being much whiter in colour than the ordinary white clay, appeared to be chalk. The effect was ghastly in the extreme, the dead white of their bodies being strongly contrasted by their black eyes and eyebrows, and the unwhitened crown of the head. I counted four young men, a youth of about fifteen years of age, six women, and nine or ten children thus disguised. With the exception of the children all wore the long necklaces of the priesthood, composed of black and white beads, with an occasional long bead of red cornelian, or a small disc of gold. The men had the skull clean shaven with the exception of two or three small circular patches of hair, and to each patch was

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attached a gold medallion of the size of a florin. This shaving of the head is peculiar to the ordination ceremony, for ordinarily, as already stated, the hair of the priests is allowed to grow long. The women wore gold ornaments in their hair, and all of both sexes wore white cloths. The children excepted, each held in the hand a small brush made of reeds about two feet in length, and one or two of the women carried sticks such as I have already described. Konfu Arabah, who was present as a kind of mistress of the ceremonies, wore the ordinary native costume, and was not smeared with white.

The drums struck up, and a crowd of men and youths behind the drummers raised a song in honour of one of the tutelary deities of the company. It should be observed that there is a special hymn for each deity, sung to a special beat of the drum, and to which a special dance is danced. After a time one of the new priests, who was sitting down, began to tremble and roll his eyes. A god was beginning to take possession of him. Two or three men at once went to him and removed the gold ornaments from his head and some bracelets of beads, as a precautionary measure, to prevent loss, and then bound each wrist with *addor*. In the meantime the trembling increased, and soon the priest was shuddering as if in an ague fit. Every portion of his body seemed to shake; the head, arms, legs, abdomen, and pectoral muscles, all quivering violently. He leaned forward and appeared to be endeavouring to vomit, doubtless to give the idea that his body was struggling to expel the god which was now supposed to possess him. A little foam appeared

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on his lips, and from time to time saliva fell on the ground. Next, with open mouth and protruding tongue, and with eyes wildly rolling, he worked himself, still seated and quivering violently, into the middle of the arena. There he suddenly leaped in the air, extending his arms over his head, and the quivering ceased. His eyes were closed, his tongue hung from his mouth, and with the slow and uncertain gait of a drunken man he walked backwards and forwards.

After a short time he directed his steps towards one side of the square and passed out, the spectators making way for him, and returned in a few minutes without his white cloth, but with a short cotton skirt depending from the waist to the knee, and ornamented with two narrow flounces at the waist. Still with closed eyes, and appearing half-dazed, he walked to and fro; then with a sudden spring he faced the drums, and, throwing his arms in the air, he waved his reed brush. Next, he stooped forward, and placing both hands upon the large drum of the company, hung his head down between his arms, shook it sideways, and uttered a gurgling and choking noise. This was the god preparing to give utterance. Then he sprang upright, and in a hoarse unnatural voice, said: "I am come. I So-and-so;" naming a tutelary deity of the company.

The drums at once struck up the rhythm in honour of this deity, the singers commenced his song, and the priest began to dance. After a few movements he stopped, and, putting his head on one side, raised his hand to his ear. This signified that the god who now possessed him could not hear the song in his honour: the singers were not singing loud enough, or distinctly

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enough, or the particular rhythm of the drums peculiar to him was not sufficiently marked. The song and drumming stopped. Then, after a few seconds, a fresh start was made; the priest danced a few steps and again stopped. The expression of acute and rapt attention, as though he were straining every nerve to listen, was exceedingly well assumed. These false starts were repeated several times, until at last the god appeared to hear satisfactorily, for the priest danced furiously, bounding in the air, twisting round and round, turning his body now here and now there, and tossing his arms wildly about, but throughout keeping perfect time to the rhythm of the drums. The exercise was most violent, and in a few minutes the performer was streaming with perspiration. It must require long practice and great endurance to be able to keep up these dances for more than a few minutes; for it must be remembered that the performer has naked feet, and instead of a springy floor of boards on which to dance, he has the bare and inelastic earth.

After some little time the performer threw his arms over his head, and then waved his brush over the drummers. This signified that the first god had left him and that another had entered him. Its name was communicated in the same way as before, and the hymn proper to it was commenced. But the same difficulty in hearing it clearly again occurred, and it was only after some ten or twelve attempts that the dance was fairly started, with other wild and furious bounds, contortions, and gestures. Throughout, the priest danced with wildly rolling eyes, and with the mouth open and tongue hanging out, probably to promote a

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flow of saliva; and he perspired so copiously that soon all the white colouring matter was washed off his body.

It should be said that every now and then he let fall words or sentences, spoken in a croaking or guttural voice. These utterances were the words of the possessing god, and the unnatural voice was supposed to be the voice of the god; and in truth it was very weird and hardly like anything human. The utterances referred, some to past events, and some to future. In the latter case they were sufficiently vague and ambiguous, for it is by these that the priest is chiefly tested; and should he make any definite and clear prediction which should afterwards be falsified by events, he would be driven out of the company as an impostor, unless he could give some satisfactory explanation. One such utterance I heard was: "If the gods do not help, there will be much sickness soon." Now, if sickness ensued, it would be because the gods would not help; and if it did not ensue, it would be because they had helped.

After this had gone on for some time, a second priest appeared to be seized with convulsive shudders. His trinkets were likewise removed and his wrists bound with *addor*, and, after going through the same performances as the first, he stalked through the crowd with closed eyes, like a man in a dream, and presently returned attired in a short skirt like that of his predecessor. Like the first he walked to and fro for some time, and then suddenly sprang round and faced the drums. This was the signal for the first to retire; he had done enough, and it was now the turn of the second.

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The second performance was similar to the first, and it was followed by a third and fourth. The youth followed the fourth priest, and contrived to put into his countenance the most vacuous and idiotic expression I have ever seen in a human face. He was possessed first by one family deity, and then by another.

The priests having thus each taken a turn, a priestess, named Aduah Ayabbah, was seized with the convulsive shuddering, and after similar manœuvres, returned attired in a short skirt. This woman had not bad features for a negress, and a slim and agile figure; she appeared to be about twenty-five years of age, and was possessed by a family deity. She danced like a mad woman, and I should not have thought it possible for any one to have so twisted and contorted the body, and have kept up so violent an exercise so long. She was succeeded by another priestess, and so it continued until each adult had had a turn. Each priest or priestess, on retiring, passed through the crowd, and presently returned without the short skirt, washed, wrapped in a white cloth, and apparently in his, or her, right mind.

From time to time during this ceremony, pious persons had approached the performers with presents of rum, eggs, or perfumes, which were at once handed by the latter to their attendants. A woman who brought some rum to the priestess who danced first, asked the god who possessed her to bless the child she was carrying on her back, and the priestess, taking some rum into her mouth, blew three clouds of spray on to the child's head. The features of the priests and priestesses were so distorted during possession, that

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when one saw them after the performance, one could hardly recognise them as the same persons. When seen in repose they were not of a bad type, and seemed to promise intelligence above the average. There was nothing repulsive about them, for, being only just initiated, they had but commenced that career of imposture, vice, and debauchery, which almost invariably, and especially in the case of priestesses, leaves its impress upon the features of the priesthood.

Of the spectators, the old people, particularly the old women, appeared most impressed by what they saw; and they apparently had the most implicit faith in the genuineness of the whole proceeding. It was they alone amongst the on-lookers who were marked with smudges of white clay in honour of the gods, and who occasionally entered the arena and danced a few steps in their honour. Of the younger people many appeared sceptical, and some openly laughed. But the imposture was so gross, and the simulation of possession seemed to me so apparent, that I wondered it could impose upon any one; and it is a bitter satire upon the so-called civilising mission of the British nation that such performances can be seriously regarded with reverence in a town that has been a British possession for nearly two hundred and fifty years. I asked some of the bystanders how it was that each priest, when possessed by a god, could yet preserve sufficient self-consciousness to leave the arena, take off his cloth, and don the short skirt; but they did not appear to regard this as suspicious. On the contrary, the explanation seemed to them obvious. The short skirt was the dress that the deities liked best; therefore, when one of them

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possessed a priest, he at once led him to the place where it was kept, and induced him to put it on. By the time that the last priestess had finished it was quite dark, and the proceedings came to an end. The whole scene possessed a strange fascination, and the strange gestures and movements of the dancers, their convulsed and distorted features and their unearthly voices, combined with the surroundings, the rhythm of the drums and the strange hymns of the singers, produced a curious sensation of the occult.

So far I have given an account of what I myself saw. The fire test was described to me by five people, who professed to have been eye-witnesses of it, and whose different accounts agreed in the main. The *modus operandi*, it appears, is to kindle a large fire of wood, and, when it has burned to a red glow, without much flame, the burning embers are arranged in a circle of from two and a half to three yards in diameter, the enclosed area being left clear. Each priest or priestess then submits in turn to the ordeal, which is supposed to show whether they have remained pure, and refrained from sexual intercourse, during the period of retirement, and so are worthy of inspiration by the gods. If they are pure they will receive no injury and suffer no pain from the fire. Into the central space left in the circle of fire steps the priest, and, immediately, rum, kerosene oil, and other inflammable liquids are thrown upon the embers, so that the flames leap in the air sometimes as high as a man's head. The flames last, perhaps, twenty seconds, and the priest then steps out. After an interval he repeats the process a second and a third time, and the ordeal is over. If he has been able to

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stay in the circle each time till the flames have subsided, and has sustained no injury, it is believed that he is pure, and that the gods, being pleased with him, have protected him from the fire. If he has been compelled by the intense heat to leap out, or if he has sustained a burn of any kind, he is not pure. This test is not submitted to naked, and the persons subjected to it always wrap themselves up closely in their cloths.

A priest or priestess proved by fire to have been unchaste, has then, to propitiate the gods and to induce them to pardon the transgression, to sacrifice to them a sheep, fowls, etc. The alleged eye-witnesses of the ordeal to which these new priests and priestesses of No. 4 Company were subjected, said that only two of them were able to remain in the circle of fire without sustaining injury. The youth whom I have mentioned as having assumed a particularly idiotic expression, was considered to be high in favour with the gods, since he sat unconcernedly on a stool in the midst of the fire, while the flames rose over his head. Of the others, some were compelled to leap out at once, and one priest had his leg burned. This man, when dancing on the 13th, had his shin bandaged. Nearly all the women confessed that they had not been chaste, so nobody was surprised when they were unable to remain in the circle of fire; and they thus escaped the most painful part of the ordeal at the cost of making sacrifices to the value of some twenty-five or thirty shillings at most.

The fire test in this case was said to have been held on the 12th of March, and the above is the manner in which the natives say all such ordeals are made. But

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although such ordeals are necessarily not uncommon, since all new priests and priestesses are believed to submit to them, I never before had been able to meet a native who had been an actual eye-witness of one. And I am not without a suspicion of the truth of the witnesses in the present case, for they were all members of No. 4 Company, and connected in one way or another with the new priests and priestesses. At first, too, it was given out that the ordeal by fire would be held on the 15th, and it was only on the afternoon of the 13th, when the bandaged leg of the priest who was supposed to have sustained a burn was generally observed, that it began to be rumoured that they had already submitted to the test "in the bush," and "at a very early hour in the morning." Perhaps the ordeal by fire is really never carried out at all, or, if it is, it cannot be of so severe a nature as is described, unless those who are able to stay amid the flames have provided themselves with some unknown preparation which renders the skin insensible to heat.

On the afternoons of the 14th and 15th, the performance of the 13th was repeated at Brick-town, and on the 16th and 17th in Cape Coast itself. These repetitions are considered necessary to enable the people to judge whether the new members of the priesthood are really in favour with the gods, and able to give utterance to their wishes truly and well. The utterances made by them when dancing are so enigmatic or ambiguous, that the people require a considerable number from each, to enable them to come to a just decision. This scepticism on the part of the laity does

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not, as I have before said, extend to those tribes residing inland beyond European influence.

The woman Konfu Arabah to whom I have referred was fairly well known to me, and I frequently conversed with her. She was a stout, matronly woman of about fifty, with a rather good-humoured expression ; and her face displayed more character than one usually observes in native women. She had charge of the image, drums, and other paraphernalia of Fohsu, which were kept in a circular house with a conical roof, close to her own house near Suru, and I went there once or twice to try and induce her to show them to me. But she always made excuses, and even the offer of money, usually irresistible on the Gold Coast, produced no effect. The fact was that for some time past she had seen me at nearly every native religious ceremony held in the neighbourhood. Such conduct on the part of a white man was strange and unusual, hence suspicious ; and I believe that she fancied I had some sinister ulterior motive in wishing to see Fohsu's belongings. The hut in which they were kept had but one low door, about three feet high, which was kept padlocked. One day I found the key of this padlock under a *Bohsŭm* which was guarding the hut, and I pretended I was going to open the door. Four or five excited priestesses at once ran towards me talking and gesticulating, while another ran off in hot haste for Konfu Arabah, who was at a little distance. Of course I had no intention of opening the door without permission ; but when, after a time, I surrendered the key, the priestesses no doubt attributed my compliance to fear of the consequences which they kept telling me

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would ensue: how flames would burst forth and destroy me, how I should be struck blind, how deadly serpents would spring upon me directly I opened the door.

Members of the priesthood are frequently applied to to procure the death of persons who have injured or offended the applicants. It is not, however, supposed by persons thus applying, that the priests have this power of themselves, but rather that, being high in favour with the gods, they are able to induce them to adopt their quarrels. But always the god which is thus induced to gratify a personal enmity, must be the god which the applicant generally worships; and it is imagined to be an extension of the protection granted by the god to his worshippers in return for their worship and offerings. Thus a man, for instance, who was a worshipper of Behnya, would, if he were so injured or offended by some individual as to desire his death, proceed to a priest of Behnya with presents and offerings, and ask his assistance and intervention. The priest, after extorting from his dupe as much money as possible, then pretends to consult the god, and conveys to the man the pretended result. Usually he gives him some preparation, composed, it is believed, of blood, grave-dust, and ground bones, or of one or more of these ingredients, and informs him that if he employs it in a certain manner the desired death will result. One method is to bury "the medicine" in a foot-path which the destined victim is sure to traverse, or to bury it at the threshold of his door; and it is believed that directly the victim walks over the spot where it is buried, flames will spring from the earth and consume him. Another method is to blow "the medicine" in

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the direction in which the man is supposed to be, and the latter, no matter how distant, is believed to be then consumed by fire. Another mode is for the priest to obtain from the applicant some of the fæces of the victim, which he then mixes up with some preparation, the result being supposed to be that the victim will shortly die in great agony of some internal complaint. At other times the priests direct a certain mode of procedure, which they assert will produce the desired effect. For instance, a priest may tell a man to take a live fowl, split it in two, and peg it down while still palpitating on a foot-path that is commonly used. While so doing he is to pronounce the name of the individual he wishes to be killed, and before long he will be dead.

Now it must occasionally happen that the man whose life was sought should die shortly after these directions have been carried out; and, in the case of such a coincidence, the priest claims the decease as being entirely due to his influence with the god. But in the great majority of cases no harm ensues, and the priest then shelters himself by explaining that the victim was protected by a deity more powerful than the one whose assistance was obtained, and which has thus set his attempts at naught. If, however, the priest be sufficiently interested in the case, or should deem it necessary to maintain the reputation of his god and the fame of his own influence with it, he causes poison to be administered to the man pointed out, which his proficiency in vegetable poisons enables him to do. He is careful not to let the applicant know that he has used other means to procure the desired end, and

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the latter attributes the death of his enemy solely to the harmless formula which he has complied with.

Although a priest who may thus use his influence with a god to destroy life does not appear to be held blameworthy, the applicant who carries out the instructions of the priest, and who is thus believed to have caused the death, is, if discovered, himself put to death; and, as it is supposed that his family must have been privy to his proceedings, even if they did not instigate the crime, or aid and abet him, they are sold as slaves, except in extreme cases, when they are also put to death. It is the malicious intent which appears to be considered. The priest is regarded simply as the mouthpiece of the god, and irresponsible; and it is the person who, through the priest, seeks the assistance of the god for a lethal purpose, that is adjudged guilty of the crime. In the case of the possessor of a *suhman*, where the man appeals directly and personally to it to rid him of a foe, he is of course considered guilty. The crime of procuring, or endeavouring to procure, death through a god, has been termed by the English on the Gold Coast "witchcraft;" a word which does not by any means convey a correct idea of the nature of the offence, and which may lead to serious misconceptions. Although it is not an uncommon crime, the fear of the consequences if detected, and the large sums charged by the priests for their services in such cases, act as powerful deterrents.

To discover an individual who has thus procured the death of another, application is made to the gods, that is, to the priests. It does not appear that the latter ever betray a man who has applied to them,

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in fact such a course would be fatal to their interests, as no one could have confidence in them; but they are rarely at a loss to indicate some one whom they declare the gods have pointed out as the guilty person. Thus many innocent lives are sacrificed, and a priest can gratify his private malice with perfect safety. Ordinarily, however, a priest when so consulted declares that the known possessor of a *suhman* has committed the crime; for, to coin a word, suhmanism trespasses somewhat upon the prerogative of the priesthood, and were *chsuhman* generally had recourse to, the priests' profitable business would be much curtailed. A man thus denounced has but small chance of escape. Sometimes, if he most strenuously denies the charge, he may be subjected to an ordeal; but more commonly, in spite of his earnest protestations of innocence, he is seized, bound, and at once put to death.

There was a well-known case of this kind near Anamaboe some years ago. A man named Yow Nahkun died after a strange and lingering illness, which set at naught all the preparations of the priests, and which not even the most costly offerings to the tutelary deity of the family and to the local gods could mitigate. In consequence it was suspected that he had been done to death; and a local deity, on being consulted, directed that the dead man himself should be applied to. The inhabitants of the town were accordingly summoned together and arranged in a circle, each town company being kept separate. Round this circle, amid the loud beating of drums, the corpse, enclosed in a rude coffin, was slowly borne upon the heads of men belonging to

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the family of the deceased. They passed one or two companies, and then came to a sudden halt in front of the next. The bearers appeared to be straining every nerve to move on, but to be unable to; and after a prolonged struggle, they fell to the earth under the corpse. This indicated that the person who had caused the death belonged to that company, and the families which composed it being conducted to their various abodes, the corpse was borne to that quarter of the town in which they resided. Here it was carried before each house in turn, until at last it refused to pass one, which of course contained the murderer. The inmates of that house were each in turn subjected to a similar test, and when the bearers sank under the weight of the corpse before an old man named Cudjo Fi, he was unanimously declared to be guilty. The unfortunate man was at once seized, and was secretly drowned at night by the head-men. Several years afterwards the murder was discovered and the murderers punished. The priests had, it appeared, told the corpse-bearers beforehand that Cudjo Fi had been the cause of their relative's death, and they accordingly acted as they did in order to make the whole of the towns-people concur as to his guilt.

From all the foregoing it will have been seen that the belief in the various deities of Classes 1, 2, and 3, is kept alive by the priests simply for their own ends, and each priest must be perfectly well aware of the imposture which he himself practises. It does not, however, follow that each priest equally regards all other priests as fellow-impostors. Doubtless

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in the great majority of cases it is so; but there are some, and we have an instance in the case of the priest who wished to appeal to Brahfo, who, though conscious of their own fraud, and of the mythical nature of the gods they themselves serve, still implicitly believe in the existence and power of other gods who are regarded as greater. The same is the case with a man who has prepared a *suhman*. I think that generally such a man is quite conscious of his own imposture, that he keeps his *suhman* simply to terrify, or to obtain a certain amount of power over, or respect from, his weaker neighbours, and that he well knows the power of his *suhman* to be *nil*. It is just possible that sometimes a man deceives himself, and thinks he has really induced a spirit of Sasabonsum to enter the object he has prepared; but such cases are, I imagine, rare, for a *suhman* is popularly believed to be able to speak, or to communicate with its possessor by sounds, and it would be difficult for a man to persuade himself that he heard speech or sounds issuing from a wooden figure or a cone of red earth. Once or twice, perhaps, some combination of circumstances and accidental sounds might lead him to come to such a conclusion; but such occurrences could not often, or ordinarily, take place. I think, therefore, that the possessor of a *suhman* is generally an impostor who plays upon the fears of his neighbours, and who also makes a profitable business out of the charms which he prepares and sells. He tells his neighbours that these possess some of the nature of the *suhman*, and they believe him. He is, as it were, a priest of a lower order, or a nonconforming priest, and supplies charms to the people just as the

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priests proper supply tutelary deities for companies, markets, towns, and families. But the knowledge of his own imposture does not lead him to suppose that the priests also are impostors. We have abundant evidence of this in the cases which are constantly occurring where such men apply to the priests for advice and assistance.

The reason why priests simulate convulsions and foaming at the mouth, to give the idea of possession by a god, may, I think, be discovered in the belief that a man in a fit is one whose body has been entered by a god. Indeed, all sickness is believed to be caused by superhuman agents who enter the body; but in the case, say, of an epileptic seizure, the natives have what they consider to be the strongest evidence of this. Consequently, the priests, in order to convey to the public the idea that a god has entered the body, simulate, as well as they can, the symptoms of a person in a fit.

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CHAPTER XI.

PSYCHOLATRY AND HUMAN SACRIFICES.

THE Tshi-speaking tribes have a word *kra*, that is used to designate the spirit of a living man, or, rather, a spirit which ordinarily dwells in a living man, and which expects sacrifice for the protection it grants. Thus, just as there is believed to be an indwelling spirit in certain tangible and inanimate objects, so also is there believed to be an indwelling spirit in the corporeal man, which is similarly distinct from the man himself. This word *kra*, though generally interpreted "soul," does not at all correspond to the European idea of a soul; for it is the man himself, in a shadowy or ghostly form, that continues his existence after death in another world, and not the *kra*. The latter is rather a guardian spirit, who lives in a man, and whose con nection with him terminates at his death.

When a man dies his *kra* becomes a *sisa*, and a *sisa* can be born again and become a *kra* in a new human body. At the death of the man the *sisa* can remain in the house with the corpse it lately tenanted as a *kra*, and can annoy the living and cause sickness. After a time, however, if it has no opportunity of entering a

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new human body, it must proceed to the land of *insisa*, where the *insisa* live and build houses. This country is believed to be situated somewhere beyond the River Volta, and *insisa* which are causing sickness or annoyance can be driven there by the spells of the priests; but they can and do return therefrom. Those which thus return are believed to do injury to the living, and particular localities are regarded as their haunt, usually from occurrences of an unfortunate nature which have there happened. Their ordinary method of injuring the living is by entering the body of a man during the temporary absence of his *kra*, and causing sickness; and a not unimportant part of the priest's office is the expulsion of such *insisa* by means of spells.

Insisa sometimes enter the bodies of ferocious or mischievous animals for the purpose of gratifying revenge, and injuring those who have in former days injured the human bodies in which they lived; and monkeys found near places of burial are commonly supposed to be tenanted by *insisa*. Generally, amongst the Tshi-speaking tribes, food and drink is set out in the house for the *sisa* of a person lately deceased, *attor* and rum being placed on a small table for it. The *sisa* of a deceased man will, it is generally believed, do no injury to his relations, unless want of respect has been shown by not properly carrying out the funeral obsequies; hence, the people like to think of the *sisa* of their deceased relative as sitting in the house with them, and being provided for, instead of wandering to and fro outside. The *sisa* is believed to remain in or near the house until the termination of the period of mourning, which, in the case of chiefs, does not

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cease until after a lapse of some six months. Then it goes to the country of *insisa*, across the River Volta.

Unlike the other tribes, the Ahantas, I am told, have a great dread of such *insisa*, and to prevent the *sisa* of a deceased relative returning to the house, the head of the corpse is shaved, and a bundle of the hair is suspended from the roof of a miniature hut, which is at once built. This hut is for the reception of the *sisa*, who, it appears, is drawn thither by the hair ; and in or near it offerings of food and drink are placed for its use.

As already said, a man's *kra* ordinarily resides in him, but it can leave him and indulge in adventures of its own. When a man falls sick it is generally supposed that his *kra* has left him, and thereby afforded an opportunity for a *sisa* to enter. It is, however, very generally believed that a *kra* only quits a man during sleep, and the incidents in a dream are believed to be the adventures of the *kra*. If a native, having perhaps taken a chill overnight, awakes in the morning with stiff and aching muscles, and the usual symptoms of muscular rheumatism, he at once concludes that during the night his *kra* has been engaged in some toilsome pursuit, or in a conflict with another *kra*, and he attributes the pain he feels to the exertions made or the blows inflicted.

Conceptions similar to this of the *kra* are common to most uncivilised peoples, and with reference to them Mr. Herbert Spencer says ("Principles of Sociology," p. 148 *et seq.*) : "Hunger and repletion, both very common with the primitive man, excite dreams of great vividness. Now, after a bootless chase and a long fast, he lies exhausted ; and, while slumbering, goes through a suc-

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cessful hunt—kills, skins, and cooks his prey; and suddenly wakens when about to take the first morsel. To suppose him saying to himself, 'It was all a dream,' is to suppose him already in possession of that hypothesis which we see he cannot have. He takes the facts as they occur. With perfect distinctness he recalls the things he saw and the actions he performed; and he accepts undoubtingly the evidence of memory. True, he all at once finds himself lying still. He does not understand how the change took place; but, as we have lately seen, the surrounding world familiarises him with unaccountable appearances and disappearances, and why should not this be one? If, at another time, lying gorged with food, the disturbance of his circulation produces nightmare—if, trying to escape and being unable, he fancies himself in the clutches of a bear, and wakes with a shriek; why should he conclude that the shriek was not caused by an actual danger? Though his squaw is there to tell him that there is no bear, yet she heard his shriek, and like him has not the remotest notion that a mere subjective state can produce such an effect—has, indeed, no terms in which to frame such a notion.

"This interpretation of a dream as an actual experience, is confirmed by narration of it in imperfect language. . . . His language does not enable him to say 'I dreamt that I saw,' instead of 'I saw.' Hence each relates his dreams as though they were realities; and thus strengthens in every other, the belief that his own dreams are realities.

"What then is the resulting notion? The sleeper

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has been visibly at rest. On awaking he recalls various occurrences, and repeats them to others. He thinks he has been elsewhere; witnesses say he has not; and their testimony is verified by suddenly finding himself where he was when he went to sleep. The simple course is that of believing both that he has remained and that he has been away—that he has two individualities, one of which leaves the other and then comes back. He too has a double existence, like many other things.

"From all quarters there come proofs that this is the conception actually formed of dreams by savages—a conception which continues to be held after considerable advances in civilisation have been made."

There can, I think, be little doubt that in this manner the conception of the *kra* arose, and it is worthy of note that the English verb "to dream" can only be rendered in Tshi by the verbs *soh* (to lift, raise, get at or to) and *dah* (to sleep) used together, the two then meaning, it appears, "to do, or get at something in sleep." The quitting of a man by his tenanting *kra* being prejudicial to the man, since it affords an opportunity for a *sisa* to enter, and he also feels the effects of the nocturnal adventures of the *kra*, a quiet night's rest is thought much of. Hence, when two natives meet, the first question asked on either side is "How did you sleep?" and on parting the salutation is "May you sleep well!"

This idea as to the possession of two individualities, one tangible and one intangible, is not confined to living creatures, but is extended to inanimate objects also. Of

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this we have an instance, already mentioned, in the food offered to the gods, the latter being believed to make use of the intangible individuality; and another is afforded by the practice of interring gold, cloths, food, and a variety of articles with the dead, the intangible individualities of which are believed to be used by the ghosts of the deceased. Nor can it be argued that the natives believe the actual articles interred to be themselves used by the dead. Apart from the fact that accidental exhumations would furnish them with absolute proof that such was not the case, they very frequently break, so as to be rendered worthless, all the articles to be interred that are breakable, with the object of rendering a violation of the grave by sceptics or Christians profitless; and by such a destruction they believe that the intangible individualities of the objects buried will not be in the least impaired.

It seems probable that this notion of two individualities grew up concurrently with the belief that all the world was peopled with inimical superhuman powers. Man, finding himself obstructed and thwarted by natural causes, attributed his want of success to imaginary beings; and the idea he had formed from dreams as to his own possession of two individualities was extended to them. Thus a river was to him, in its tangible form, a stream of water; and in its intangible form, a malignant superhuman being who destroyed life and caused disaster.* And as with the higher deities, so with

* In the case of the chief god of Djuabin (Chapter VI.) the intangible individuality, *i.e.*, the spirit of the river, was believed to have been carried away, the tangible individuality, *i.e.*, the river itself, remaining behind.

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those of Classes 3 and 4. These also possess two individualities: the tangible one, a figure, stone, or lump of earth; and the intangible one, the indwelling spirit. For although I believe that these lower gods owe their existence to priestcraft, yet the priests would naturally use and follow out a line of thought familiar to themselves and their dupes.

But to resume. The natives of the Gold Coast, therefore, believe that in man there are two individualities, namely, the living man and the tenanting *kra;* and these become respectively at the death of the man, a ghost or shadowy man, and a *sisa*. On this point there is an absolute consensus of opinion amongst the natives; but with regard to the time *insisa* may linger around their former habitations, and the position of the land of *insisa*, opinions vary, for there is in such matters no standard of orthodoxy. The account which I have given is, however, the belief almost invariably held.

We, too, have a very similar notion to this of the *kra*, and which is probably a survival of such a belief. A living man is believed to be tenanted by another individuality which is termed a soul, and which reasons with man through what is called "conscience." When the man dies, however, we make the soul go to the next world, instead of the shadowy man; but a good deal of confusion exists in our ideas on this point, and the belief in ghosts, the shadowy outlines of former living men, seems to point to a time when each of the two original individualities was believed to pursue a separate existence after the death of the man. A ghost, like a *sisa*, can remain in the house and annoy the living,

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until driven away by the spells of the priests, who "lay the ghost."

The birthday of a man is the day sacred to his *kra*. If the man be rich he kills a sheep, if poor, a fowl, and prepares a banquet. He shaves his head and abstains from all work. In the morning he goes to wash, and, providing himself with an egg, and some new fibre of the kind used as a sponge, he stands before the calabash or other utensil containing the water, and addresses his *kra*, asking for its protection and assistance during the coming year, as he is about to worship it and keep that day sacred to it. He then dashes the egg into the calabash, so that it breaks, and washes himself with the fluid; after which he puts white clay on his face, and dons a white cloth. Sometimes members of the higher classes, kings, or chiefs, keep sacred to their *kra* the day of the week on which they were born. Thus Kwoffi Karikari, having been born on a Friday, made it a law that no blood should be shed on that day.

The Tshi name for the ghost or shadowy man, which continues the career of the corporeal man at the death of the latter, is *srahman*, plural *asrahmanfo*. There are on the Gold Coast believed to be two kinds of *asrahmanfo*, namely, the ghosts of those who have met with a sudden death—of those who have been killed in battle, or whose career has been unexpectedly terminated by some fatal accident—and the ghosts of those who have died of old age or disease. The first are called "lingering *asrahmanfo*," because they linger about their former habitations for a period of one or two months before making the journey to *Srahmanadzi*, "the land of ghosts." While so lingering they are occasionally seen

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by man, clad in white, and streaked with white clay. They linger because they have died before completing their proper term of life; and, for the same reason, the road to *Srahmanadzi* is dark and gloomy to them, and difficult to find. On arriving there, however, they recover health in a month or so. The ghosts of those who die of old age or of disease proceed at once to *Srahmanadzi*, because they have completed their time. Consequently they are never seen by the living. The road to *Srahmanadzi* is plain to them, but they are there sometimes for two or three years before they recover health.

Srahmanadzi is like the world, with towns, villages, forests, mountains, rivers, etc. It is believed to be beneath the earth, and to be less bright than the world of the living. A proverb says: "A corner in the world is better than the whole of *Srahmanadzi*." When the world is in darkness there is light in *Srahmanadzi*, and *vice versâ*. There an old man becomes young, a young man a boy, and a boy an infant. They grow and become old. But age does not carry with it any diminution of strength, or wasting of the body. When they reach the prime of life they remain so, and never change more.*

Every *srahman* does in *Srahmanadzi* that which he was accustomed to do when he was a living man in the world. An agriculturist cultivates the soil, a fisherman fishes, and a slave waits upon and attends his master. A chief in the world is a chief in *Srahmanadzi*, and a slave is a slave. *Asrahmanfo* have

* Another view, however, very commonly held, is that each *srahman* is of the age at which the living man had arrived.

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the same passions, appetites, needs, and necessities as living men; therefore, in the grave with the corpse are placed food and drink, tobacco, pipes, gold-dust, trinkets, and cloths, according to the wealth and position of the deceased. The two first are for use during the journey to *Srahmanadzi*, and the remainder on arrival there. The spiritual portions, or intangible individualities of these articles, are made use of by the *asrahmanfo*.

This belief in a continuance of the former life in the next world, where identical positions will be held, and similar pursuits followed, is also doubtless due to the significance attached to dreams. A man who dreamed of a deceased ancestor or relative would dream of him as he had seen him, or as he had been described to him. As dreams are merely disconnected and fragmentary memories stored in the brain, they must naturally be combinations of things seen, heard, or thought of. Hence a man would dream of a deceased chief as still a chief, and of a slave as still a slave.

From this belief in a continuance of the former life in the next world naturally and deductively follows the custom of putting persons to death at the decease of a man of rank, to enable those sacrificed to continue a ghostly attendance. A chief who has been accustomed to be waited upon by a number of attendants during life, will, the natives argue, require and expect a similar attendance in *Srahmanadzi*. Therefore they put to death the wives and slaves of a deceased chief, in order that their ghosts, being released from their bodies, may be enabled to enter upon a ghostly servitude. In this case, although the death of those sacrificed is sudden,

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the usual rule appears to be suspended, and the ghosts of those slain at funeral obsequies do not necessarily become lingering *asrahmanfo*. Having been released from their bodies for a specific purpose, namely, attendance, they at once take up that duty and wait upon the *srahman* of their former earthly master, lingering with him if he lingers, or proceeding at once with him to *Srahmanadzi*.

The practice of sacrificing human beings at funerals, therefore, arises from a feeling of affection, respect, and awe for the dead. It is done so that the departed may suffer no discomfort in his new abode, but find himself surrounded by those attentions and ministrations to which he has been accustomed. So far from being due to any inherent bloodthirstiness in the Tshi-speaking peoples, it is really due to an exaggerated regard for the dead. Amongst them, as with many other peoples, the idea has been extended, so that, even years after a man's death, slaves and captives are sometimes sacrificed to his memory, in the belief that their ghosts will swell the throng of his attendants.

The number of persons sacrificed depends upon the wealth and rank of the deceased; but the favourite wives and most trusted slaves are, beyond the Colonial boundary, almost invariably immolated at the demise of their lord. The greatest slaughter takes place at the decease of a king of Ashanti, and scores of human beings are sacrificed whenever a member of the royal family dies. On September 1st, 1873, when the German missionaries were prisoners at Coomassie, one of the royal family died, and the account of the funeral ceremonies is so typical that I give it in full:

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"Our small affairs were now forgotten, for a sudden death plunged the palace and the town into great grief. On our Rosa's birthday the second crown prince, Mensa Kuma, died, at sixteen years of age. This was publicly announced at four o'clock, but before that hour royal servants occupied all the streets to catch the fugitives. Kwabena, the captive son of the chief of Peki, who had often been our informant, brought us the news, warning us to let none leave the house lest he should fall into the hands of the *odumfo*,* who were searching everywhere for victims.

"His master Kwantiabo had been sitting in council half-an-hour before in the palace with the other chiefs, surrounded by their followers. A messenger suddenly appeared and whispered to the king, who stooping down, rubbed the tips of his fingers with red earth, and painted his forehead.† On this all the servants rushed from the palace, and on a sign from his master our young informant did the same, without really knowing why, for this was his first experience of this savage custom. Soon after came Dawson in a state of alarm, to inquire the reason of the awful tumult. The people outside were frantic, seizing poultry and sheep, killing them and throwing them away, and men were everywhere falling victims to the *odumfo's* knife.

"From one of Bosommuru's followers we afterwards heard that the king's brother had died, and that nearly a hundred and fifty men would be sacrificed at his funeral. In the evening of the same day we saw men

* *Odumfo* = Executioners.

† To smear the body with red earth is a sign of mourning, as with white clay is a sign of rejoicing.

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carrying numbers of long, fresh-cut branches, which were to serve for binding the sacrifices. Owusu Kokoo at length appeared, greeting us from the king, who sent us word that his youngest brother had died, and as his friends he must inform us, and we must tell the Fantis of the event, but we need fear nothing; although the customary sacrifices were not pleasant. Indeed they were not. This was an attention which induced us to suppose he had heard of our anxiety and excitement about passing events.

"The deceased youth was to be followed to the grave by slaves only, some of his own, and others who had long been languishing in irons. It was expected that every great chief would offer a gift of human life, and many men who were going about free, fell beneath the knife of the *odumfo*. Up to midday * the king and his followers had been sitting at the north side of the market-place, under the tree where we used to preach. Around him were crowds playing the wildest music, who all fasted, but drank the more. These offerings from the chiefs were presented: dresses, silk cushions, gold ornaments, sheep, and men. In the afternoon he resumed his seat in the market-place, and all who had guns fired them; at this signal some victims fell.

"MM. Bounat and Kühne, who were in the street for a few moments, saw three *odumfo* rush upon a man standing among the crowd, pierce his cheeks with a knife and order him to stand up; they then drove him before them, with his hands bound behind, like a sheep to the slaughter.

* On September 2nd.

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"The deceased prince had, besides several wives of royal blood, three of low birth, who, when they heard of his death, ran away and hid themselves. The king supplied their places by other girls, who, painted white, and hung with gold ornaments, sat around the coffin to drive away the flies, and were strangled at the funeral. The same fate befell six pages, who, similarly ornamented and painted, crouched around the coffin, which was carried out at midnight. For three days previously the poor lads had known they were doomed to go with the unhappy women to the grave.

"The funeral ceremonies were continued on Saturday the 6th, by every one having their heads shaved. The dancing-women attended at the palace to comfort the king, for which they received presents of gold. On this occasion, a princess quarrelled, and allowed herself to use insulting words. The king ordered her to be taken out on the spot, and not only did *she* lose her head, but a prince and other Ashanti nobles fell on the same day. It was really a reign of terror, and none could understand whether it was an outburst of ungoverned passion, or an intimation of absolute power. On Monday, a week after the death, a fast was again observed, and we knew too well the sad accompaniment. . . .

"From the 1st to the 10th of September the slaughter continued. The king himself actually killed some members of the royal house, many slain corpses lay exposed, and in forty days the same dreadful doings were to be repeated."

The idea in piercing the cheeks with a knife, is

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to prevent the victims, who are usually seized unexpectedly, from swearing on the life of the king. That is, they swear, if they have an opportunity, that if they die, the king must die also. Such an oath is believed to involve danger to the king; and the life of a man who succeeds in taking this oath before his cheeks are pierced is always spared. The usual practice appears to be for two *odumfo* to come suddenly behind a man, and thrust each a knife through the cheeks, one from each side. The blades pass over the tongue, and a handle is left protruding from each cheek.

In September, 1871, when the Ashanti army under Adu Boffo returned from the campaign in Krepe, similar scenes of horror were enacted. To quote from the same work:*

"There followed, of course, a day of mourning for the slain of Coomassie, which was kept in every village throughout the land. Three great chiefs (one of them Prince Ansa's brother) having fallen, it was necessary to send a considerable retinue after them into the other world, so that the shrieks of the mourners were heard all day, and the sounds of the horns and drums were unceasing. Most of the inhabitants fasted, and were painted red, while so much brandy was distributed that they were staggering about the next day quite drunk. Palm and Smith were living in a yard, where fifteen poor prisoners lay in irons ready to be slain that day. A woman who tried to escape was caught, and with the knife through her cheeks was made to sit in the market-

* "Four Years in Ashanti."

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place, amidst the taunts of the crowd, till the fatal hour arrived.

"The death-wake continued over Sunday (September 10th), but the number of victims decreased. One hundred and thirty-six high chiefs had fallen in this war, which gives some idea of the sacrifice of human life that followed. For each of the six belonging to Coomassie, thirty of their people were killed, thirty for those of Sokora, and so on."

At the funeral obsequies of an uncle of Kwoffi Kari-kari, who died at the Ashanti town of Kokofu in November, 1871, two hundred human beings were sacrificed. The ceremonies for the Ashanti king, Kwamina, who was deposed in 1797 and died a few years later, were repeated weekly for three months, two hundred slaves being sacrificed on each occasion. But the greatest known slaughter took place at the funeral of the mother of Tutu Kwamina, who died about 1816. The king is said to have furnished three thousand victims, two thousand of whom were prisoners who had been captured in the recent invasion of Fanti. The five principal towns of Ashanti contributed one hundred victims each, and the inferior towns ten each.

The heads of the victims slain are usually placed at the bottom of the grave, and on them the coffin rests. At the last moment a freeman is sometimes stunned, his throat cut, or a deep gash made in the back of the neck, and he rolled into the grave, which is immediately filled up. The intention is to furnish the individual for whom the ceremonies are being held, with a ghostly follower superior to the slaves who have already been slaughtered. But this is a luxury which

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can only be enjoyed by families who are so powerful that the relations of the slain freeman dare not bring actions for loss against them.

An Ashanti king has in his following a number of persons called *okra* (plural of *kra*), all of whom, with the exception of some two or three, are put to death on the grave at his decease. The lives of the *okra* being thus dependent upon that of the king, they exercise great vigilance in the detection of anything that might be prejudicial to it, and form a most effectual body-guard. The greater number of them are the favourite slaves of the king, while others are men who have voluntarily joined this company after having distinguished themselves in war, or shown their fidelity in some striking manner. At first sight it seems extraordinary that with a certain fate in prospective men should elect to become *okra*. But, apart from the fact that the Tshi-speaking natives generally regard death with apathy, if not unconcern, Ashanti kings usually come to the throne while yet young, so the probability of an individual *kra* dying before the king is as great as the reverse; while a *kra* lives at the expense of the king, and is protected from all palavers. The *okra* are distinguished by a circular gold plate worn on the breast; most of them are intimates or advisers of the king, and some two or three amongst them are entrusted with the secrets of state. These latter are the ones exempted from sacrifice, and are so exempted in order that they may communicate their knowledge to the new monarch. At the death of a king all the funeral ceremonies which have taken place during his reign must be repeated, with the same number of

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human victims as before. Large numbers of women and girls are also slain to furnish the departed ruler with ghostly wives.

It is obvious that were the hundreds of victims annually sacrificed in Ashanti, themselves Ashantis, that nation would soon become decimated, and cease to be formidable to its neighbours. But such is not the case. The wives, and one or two personal attendants, who are put to death, are Ashantis, as also are the criminals who are reserved for such occasions to swell the retinue of the deceased; but the large majority of those slain are slaves or prisoners of war. The word "criminal" here has a very extended meaning, for even the most trivial offences are, under the Ashanti code, punishable by death; and slaves who have attempted to escape from a cruel master, persons who have used the king's oath, or those who have, contrary to a law of Coomassie, picked up some gold they have dropped in the market-place, are reserved for slaughter at a funeral, equally with murderers and incendiaries.

Since the life in Srahmanadzi is a continuation of that in the world, since the chief remains a chief, and the slave a slave, the former is naturally believed to have influence and to be of some importance in the new abiding-place. Hence it has happened with many peoples that rulers who were distinguished during life for sagacity and power, are appealed to after death for advice and assistance; and, as years roll by, such chiefs frequently become deified, and perhaps confounded with former gods. The Tshi-speaking tribes do not appear to have arrived at the stage at which distinguished ancestors become deified; for although

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ancestor-worship prevails to a certain extent, and the assistance of deceased rulers is occasionally invoked, their *asrahmanfo* are regarded as quite distinct from, and much less powerful than, the gods proper. The idea seems to be that the *asrahmanfo* retain still a certain amount of interest in the welfare of the tribe to which they belonged in life; and, when appealed to, they exercise such power as they possess for its protection. This idea may be traced in the word *srahman* itself, the Tshi word for the ghost of a dead man, for it is compounded of *srah* (to watch or guard), and *ɔman* (tribe, nation or town), and has the literal meaning of "guardian of the tribe." A festival, termed Affirahbi, is held annually towards the end of August, when a general remembrance of the dead is observed. This festival will be described in the chapter on Religious Ceremonies and Festivals.

The skeletons of the former kings of Ashanti are preserved at Bantama, an outlying suburb of Coomassie, and to these deceased rulers sacrifices are made in times of national calamity; while, on a day which falls early in February, a festival is held in their honour. This is a development of ancestor-worship peculiar to Ashanti, and may no doubt be accounted for by the greater stability enjoyed by that kingdom. Ashanti has been known to Europeans as a kingdom since the middle of the seventeenth century, and their military superiority, which has secured the capital from destruction by other tribes, has enabled them to preserve the remains, and with them the memories, of former rulers. The other states have all been more or less ephemeral; most of those enumerated by Bosman in

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1701 have now disappeared, and the very names of their rulers have in most cases been long forgotten.

A description of the festival held in honour of the deceased kings of Ashanti has been left by Messrs. Ramseyer and Kühne. They say:* "The most dreadful of the Ashanti festivals, Bantama, or 'death-wake,' now approached. The king went early in the morning of February 5th, to Bantama, where the remains of his deceased predecessors were preserved in a long building, approached by a gallery, and partitioned into small cells, the entrances of which were hung with silken curtains. In these apartments reposed the skeletons of the kings, fastened together with gold wire, and placed in richly ornamented coffins, each being surrounded by that which had given him most pleasure during his life. On this occasion every skeleton was placed on a chair in his cell to receive the royal visitor; who, on entering, offered it food; after which a band played the favourite melodies of the departed. The poor victim selected as a sacrifice, with a knife thrust through his cheeks, was then dragged forward and slain, the king washing the skeleton with his blood. Thus was each cell visited in turn, sacrifice after sacrifice being offered, till evening closed ere the dreadful round was repeated.

"We had heard the blowing of horns and beating of drums throughout the day, and were told that nearly thirty men had been slain. These, alas! were not all, for at six o'clock, after the king had returned, the horn and the drum again sounded, betokening that more victims were yet to fall, and far into the night the

* "Four Years in Ashanti," p. 117.

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melancholy sound continued. Two blasts of the horn signified 'death! death!' three beats of the drum, 'cut it off!' and a single beat from another drum announced 'the head has dropped.'"

Any repairs that may be necessary in this building at Bantama are always accompanied by the shedding of human blood, to propitiate the deceased kings; and, after a successful campaign, it is usual to sacrifice a number of the prisoners of war to the *manes* of these kings, in gratitude for their aid. The ghosts of these former rulers are not supposed to reside in Bantama; they are, like other *asrahmanfo*, in Srahmanadzi.

Besides those who are sacrificed at funerals, or for the purpose of swelling the retinues of long-departed chiefs, human victims are frequently offered to the gods. In this case the same train of thought seems to be followed. The gods are, as I have already said, not supernatural but superhuman, and have passions and needs similar to those of men; feeling anger, hate, and love, marrying and bearing children, and requiring food and attendance. They are believed to make use of the intangible individuality of the food offered to them, and the ghosts of the human victims sacrificed to them are believed to pass at once into a condition of ghostly servitude to them, just as those sacrificed at the funerals of chiefs are believed to pass into a ghostly attendance.

The persons ordinarily sacrificed to the gods are prisoners of war or slaves. When the latter, they are usually aliens, as a protecting god is not so well satisfied with the sacrifice of his own people. A war is never entered upon without the chief local deities

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having been consulted, and without a favourable answer having been returned by them; and, in the event of victory, the glory thereof is attributed to them. Hence, after a victory, it is customary to put to death a number of prisoners as a thank-offering to the deity or deities to whose assistance the natives believe they owe their success, and also as an inducement to them to continue the same protection. Prisoners of war, being the worshippers and followers of the gods which have contended against the gods of the victors, are considered to be peculiarly acceptable offerings to the latter; and the result is that after a successful engagement a dreadful slaughter of prisoners invariably takes place, which, though it has commonly been attributed to inherent bloodthirstiness, really proceeds from a sense of religious duty to the gods.

In time of peace, human victims are sacrificed to the gods whenever their assistance is required in any matter of importance. For ordinary affairs fowls, sheep, or bullocks, are sacrificed, there being a regularly ascending scale of sacrifice, according to the urgency of the need of protection or assistance, which culminates in the highest and most costly sacrifice of all, that of a human life. The number of persons sacrificed to a god depends upon the power which the god is believed to possess for good or evil; to the least powerful, one or two, to others four, five, or six, and finally to the highest, as in Ashanti to Tando, fourteen. These numbers represent the ordinary human sacrifice, for they are increased indefinitely in times of public calamity, or when the need for assistance becomes paramount.

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Both prisoners of war sacrificed after a victory, and persons sacrificed to the gods in propitiation, are put to death by decapitation. There are occasions on which the victims are slain otherwise, but these are special, and each mode has a particular significance and intention. For instance, in time of war, when an invasion by the enemy is feared, a sacrifice is made to the chief local deity of a male or female adult; who is secured flat on the ground, with arms and legs extended to their full length, while sharpened stakes are driven through the body, and the victim abandoned to a lingering and painful death. The sacrifice is always impaled on that path by which the foe is expected to advance, and it is believed that it will prevent them proceeding further. An invading force, on meeting such a sacrifice in its path, would turn back, and, by cutting fresh paths through the forest, turn the flank of the supposed obstacle, which is only of effect as far as the path on which it is placed is concerned. The body of a human victim who had thus been sacrificed was discovered by the advanced scouts of the British force on the summit of the Adansi Hills, on the 17th of January, 1874. This was to prevent our further progress, and a priest came forward and warned the party to go no further, as certain death lay before.

At the present day in the interior, as was formerly the case in the colony, a common sacrifice to the tutelary deity of a town, when the inhabitants are threatened by some great danger, is a newly-born infant, a few hours old at the most, who is torn limb from limb on the spot where the *Bohsŭm* is kept, and the members strewn around. There seems to be an

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idea that the child, being absolutely guiltless of all possible neglect or offence, is a peculiarly acceptable sacrifice to the guardian deity, which, therefore, exerts its full power to avert the impending danger.

A constant familiarity with the scenes of slaughter that are presented at funerals, and when human victims are sacrificed to the gods, has produced among the northern Tshi-speaking tribes a want of sympathy and a callousness to human suffering which is perhaps unparalleled. Doubtless, in former times, the southern tribes were equally inhuman, and the improved feeling which now prevails amongst them is simply due to the cessation of such brutalising scenes. Where human sacrifices have been the longest time forbidden, as at Cape Coast, we find the people most humane; but even there scenes of bloodshed and cruelty were too recent for their effects to be already eradicated, and in times of excitement and terror the old barbarity again breaks forth. As we proceed inland, inhumanity increases, from Wassaw, where human sacrifices were not abolished till 1872, to Adansi, where they are still offered, until it finally culminates in Ashanti, where the public sacrifice of human victims has always been most frequent, and has been carried out on the largest scale.

Prisoners of war are treated with shocking barbarity. Men, women, and children—mothers with infants on their backs and little children scarcely able to walk—are stripped and secured together with cords round the neck in gangs of ten or fifteen; each prisoner being additionally secured by having the hands fixed to a heavy block of wood, which has to be carried

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on the head. Thus hampered, and so insufficiently fed that they are reduced to mere skeletons, they are driven after the victorious army for month after month, their brutal guards treating them with the greatest cruelty; while, should their captors suffer a reverse, they are at once indiscriminately slaughtered to prevent recapture. Ramseyer and Kühne mention the case of a prisoner, a native of Accra, who was "kept in log," that is, secured to the felled trunk of a tree by an iron staple driven over the wrist, with insufficient food for four months, and who died under this ill-treatment. Another time they saw, amongst some prisoners, a poor, weak child, who, when angrily ordered to stand upright, "painfully drew himself up, showing the sunken frame in which every bone was visible." Most of the prisoners seen on this occasion were mere living skeletons. One boy was so reduced by starvation, that his neck was unable to support the weight of his head, which, as he sat, drooped almost to his knees. Another, equally emaciated, coughed as if at the last gasp; while a young child was so weak from want of food as to be unable to stand. The Ashantis were much surprised that the missionaries should exhibit any emotion at such spectacles; and, on one occasion, when they went to give food to some starving children, the guards angrily drove them back. Nor is it to prisoners and aliens alone that such barbarity is exhibited by the northern tribes, for an equal indifference is shown to the sufferings of their own people. Servants or slaves who may fall sick, are driven out into the bush to die or recover as best they may; and the infirm and helpless are invariably neglected, if not ill-

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treated. In the village of Abankoro the missionaries saw an orphan boy, about five years old, who went about unnoticed, and reduced to a skeleton. He was thus neglected because he could not speak, and was regarded as an idiot. He cried for joy when food was given to him, and the kindness of the missionaries to the little sufferer astonished the people. One woman was so far moved by their example as to wash the child, "an act," say they, "of singular compassion in an Ashanti."

The most revolting scenes of cruelty and bloodshed are regarded by the populace generally with positive pleasure, and no sooner is the death-drum heard, than an excited mob, eager for the spectacle, rushes to the spot, and embitters the last moments of the victims with taunts and jeers. The executioners, to pander to the tastes of the mob, or to gratify their own lust for cruelty, practise the most shocking barbarities, blunting their knives to increase the sufferings of their victims, or cutting pieces of flesh from the neck before striking off the head. In fact, the most refined tortures that human ingenuity can devise are constantly inflicted, death is ever present, and human suffering and human life are alike disregarded. The acme of barbarity appears to have been reached in the punishment of a murderer, narrated by Messrs. Ramseyer and Kühne, with which I will conclude this revolting subject.

"On June 5th (1871), a murderer with his hands bound behind him, a knife through his cheeks, and two forks piercing his back, was dragged by a rope past our rooms. Others had been thus tortured in various ways, the vital parts of the body not being wounded. Com-

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mencing at midday, the punishment increased in intensity till eight o'clock, when the poor wretch was gashed all over, his arms cut off, and himself compelled to dance for the amusement of the king before being taken to the place of execution. If he could not or would not dance, lighted torches were applied to his wounds; to escape this excessive torture he made the greatest efforts to move, until the drum was beaten and the head cut off. Some victims thus lost several of their limbs, or were pierced by an iron rod through the calves of both legs or other parts; and yet murders were far more frequent here than in the British protectorate."

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CHAPTER XII.

ON FETISHISM.

It may have been observed that throughout the previous chapters I have, as far as possible, avoided using the words "fetish" and "fetishism"; words which are commonly used in connection with the religious beliefs of the Negro races of West Africa, especially when the subject is that of the inhabitants of the Gold Coast. So much confusion has already been caused by the general use of these words (to which I may myself in some small degree have contributed), and by the extension of the term fetishism to forms of worship to which it ought never to apply, that I have considered it better to abstain as much as possible from the use of either.

The word "fetish" is very commonly supposed to belong to some African language, whereas it is purely European in origin. It is also generally believed to be used by the natives of the Gold Coast in connection with their religious beliefs, whereas the words "fetish" and "fetishism" are absolutely unknown to all Negroes except such as have come into contact with Europeans, and have learned them from them. Even these would never use either word to persons of their own nation,

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and neither could be heard in a Tshi or Ga sentence. To a native who had not mixed with Europeans they would convey no idea at all.

The word "fetish" is of Portuguese origin, and is a corruption of *feitiço*, an amulet or charm. At the time of the Portuguese discoveries in West Africa, that is to say, from about 1441 to 1500, Catholic Europe abounded in relics of saints, charmed rosaries, images, and crosses, which were, in the majority of cases, regarded by their wearers as amulets or charms. Such articles were termed by the Portuguese *feitiços*, and a manufacturer or seller of them was termed a *feitiçeiro*. In the Portuguese possessions to the south of the Congo, the word *feitiçeiro* is still commonly used to mean a preparer or maker of charms or amulets, as well as in its more modern meaning of sorcerer, or wizard. When, therefore, during their voyages along the West African Coast, the Portuguese found the natives reverencing or worshipping certain objects, such as those tenanted by tutelary deities, or those charms obtained from a *suhman*, they naturally spoke of them as the *feitiços* of the natives; having in fact, no other word then commonly in use with which to describe charms, or that which they supposed the natives to regard as charms or amulets.

From the origin of the word, and its application in Europe in that age, it appears clear that the Portuguese could only have applied the term *feitiço* to tangible and inanimate objects, to the wooden figures, stones, or cones of earth believed by the natives to be the abiding-places of indwelling gods, or to the charms obtained from a *suhman*. For instance, had a Portuguese sailor

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observed a Dahoman worshipping or showing respect to an iguana, he would never have thought of terming that reptile a *feitiço*. Neither would he have termed the local spirit of a river, the sea, a hill, valley, or forest, to which sacrifice might be made, a *feitiço*. Hence, since a *feitiço* is, properly speaking, a tangible and inanimate object alone, fetishism can properly only mean the worship of such objects. The practice of propitiating by offerings beings who are believed to dwell in the woods or mountains, the rivers or the sea, is not fetishism; nor is the worship or reverence paid to certain animals by particular tribes fetishism. Neither can the worship of idols be so termed, for the idol is merely the representation of an absent god, or the symbol of an idea, and has of itself no supernatural or superhuman power or quality. Narrowed down to its proper limits, a fetish is something tangible and inanimate, which is believed to possess power of itself.

The confusion which has resulted from the improper use of the term "fetish" is extreme, and is now probably irreparable. Traveller after traveller who has visited West Africa has used the term to describe almost any form of worship he has chanced to observe; and English-speaking Negroes have naturally now begun to use it in the same way. Should you inquire why a certain tree in the centre of a village is enclosed by a neat fence of palm sticks, you are told it is a "fetish" tree. You are informed that should a native invoke a certain "fetish," who lives in the Akropong forest, to rid him of an enemy, that enemy will assuredly perish. You ask why a certain path is carried only some fifty yards or so into the bush, as it seems to lead nowhere, and

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you are told it is a "fetish" path, that the rock at its termination is "fetish," and that a "fetish" resides there. A man before drinking scatters a few drops of rum from his glass on to the earth. Why does he do it? It is "fetish." A living fowl is seen pegged down upon a footpath. Why is this done? It is "fetish." This is the unsatisfactory explanation that awaits one at every turn. Yet most, if not all, of the practices which are thus roughly grouped together under the term "fetish," are widely distinct from the worship of tangible and inanimate objects.

De Brosses, author of the well-known work, entitled "Du Culte des Dieux Fétiches," which was published in 1760, is generally supposed to be the inventor of the word "fetish," as at present used; but this is, I think, an error, as in Bosman's "Description of Guinea," published in London in 1705, the word "fetiche" is frequently met with, and is there used as a word whose signification was very generally known. He says: "Fetiche, or Bossum in the Negro language, derives itself from their false God, which they call Bossum;" and further on he adds that the word Fetiche "is used in a religious sense," and "that all things made in honour of their false gods, never so mean, are called Fetiche." To De Brosses, however, and his theory of the necessity of a primordial fetishism, much of the confusion concerning fetishism which at present exists is due, as well as the wide-spread belief that fetishism is the chief characteristic of the religious conceptions of the Negro tribes of the Gold Coast. He termed all terrestrial and material objects apparently worshipped by the Negroes "fetishes," and this *culte* he denominated

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"fetishism." His theory was that as it was impossible to conceive a lower form of religion than fetishism, it might therefore be assumed to be the beginning of all religion.

De Brosses never, I believe, visited the West Coast of Africa himself, but he collected the best descriptions he could find in the works of travellers, sailors, and others, particularly those of the early explorers. His definition of a fetish is "anything which people like to select for adoration;" and, as examples of fetishes, he gives "a tree, a mountain, the sea, a piece of wood, the tail of a lion, a pebble, a shell, salt, a fish, a plant, a flower, certain animals, such as cows, goats, elephants, sheep, or anything like these." These, he says, are the gods of the Negroes, to which sacrifice and prayer are offered, and from which, in return, assistance and protection are expected. Now, as may be seen from the examples of fetishes he gives, De Brosses mixed up Animal Worship and Nature Worship with the worship of tangible and inanimate objects, and termed these three distinct forms of worship "fetishism;" while, at the same time, he assumed that these so-called fetishes were worshipped on account of the power they were believed to possess of themselves alone.

In the latter particular he was, without doubt, misled by the persons from whose narratives he derived his information. He collected, as I have already said, the accounts left by early explorers, navigators, and travellers, and generalised from them. Now I am strongly of opinion that, as far as the description of the religious ideas of a people is concerned, the narratives of all such persons should be accepted only

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with extreme caution, unless they have resided for some considerable time amongst that people. It is only after a residence of some time, perhaps years, amongst an uncultured people, that one can grasp their modes of thought and their ideas upon religious matters. As a rule, uncivilised men are averse to any discussion upon such subjects; and, to rid themselves of an importunate inquirer, will give such answers as they think will best please, or such as are obviously suggested by the question. The individuals whose accounts De Brosses collected were, for the most part, men who had performed coasting voyages along the West African shores, stopping here perhaps a day, there a week, and in a third place a month. It could not be expected that such men could acquire a thorough knowledge of the ideas and beliefs of the peoples with whom they thus made a passing acquaintance. Their observations need not necessarily have been superficial, but they would have lacked time and opportunity for thorough investigation. When they described things which they saw they were usually accurate; but when they generalised or made deductions, they were commonly inaccurate, for their data were insufficient. Thus one can conceive that a sailor or traveller in West Africa, landing at a native town, and seeing a man offering sacrifice to a tutelary deity, might inquire how or whence he obtained the god. If it was a wooden figure, and he was told that the man had himself made it, he would perhaps go away with the impression that the natives made at will gods for themselves. If it chanced to be a stone or piece of wood that had been elected to the dignity of a *Bohsŭm* through a dream,

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and he was told that the man had brought it from the bush, he would perhaps come to the conclusion that the natives picked up any object at random, and worshipped it as a god. In some such way probably arose the popular error concerning fetishism on the Gold Coast; and there is a great deal of evidence pointing to this conclusion. In the account left of the proceedings of the Portuguese at Elmina in 1482, to which I have referred when describing the Elmina god Behnya, the idea conveyed is that the natives worshipped the rock itself, whereas the rock was and is regarded merely as sacred, as being the abode of the god. Bosman,* too, says the Negroes of the Gold Coast "adore as a god" the River Prah—a statement which leaves the impression that the river itself is worshipped, whereas this is far from being the case. Villault† makes a similar mistake concerning a ceremony he saw performed at a lagoon near Accra. In fact, not to multiply instances, the narratives of former travellers in West Africa abound in errors of this sort, where the worship is described as being paid to the natural object itself instead of to the spirit. Not one of these travellers has grasped the Negro idea of the two individualities believed to be possessed by all animate and most inanimate objects.

It is also difficult to understand how these travellers obtained from their native informants such clear and precise statements as some they have given. The very clearness and precision of these statements appear suspicious. It must be remembered that the travellers and the natives had no language in common, in which

* "Pinkerton's Voyages," vol. xvi., p. 348.

† "Astley's Voyages," vol. ii., p. 668.

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they could exchange ideas. That the former learned the native dialects is improbable, except perhaps to the extent of a few words and phrases which would be useful for special purposes, for they would not have time. An unwritten language with a complex grammar cannot be learned in a few weeks. It is the more probable that the natives acquired a smattering of Portuguese, Dutch, and English. But they could not have spoken one of these languages fluently, nor could they have known which words were the exact equivalents of words in their own tongue. One can hardly find such a native at the present day, after a period of four hundred years during which these languages, and especially the two latter, have been constantly used on the Coast. One has only to turn to the local newspapers published at Sierra Leone, where English has been the only language in use for the last hundred years, to see how little the English language is really understood even there;* and on the Gold Coast, where the natives have a language of their own, and where English is the exception, it is of course worse. Yet it was from such men, speaking broken Portuguese, Dutch, or English, that these exact and lucid explanations of matters the most difficult to explain clearly, viz., their ideas and conceptions upon religious matters, were supposed to have been obtained. Once the mistake was made, once the idea became

* The following extract may serve as an example :—"Those who live in ceiled houses love to hear the pit-pat of the rain overhead; whilst those whose houses leak are the subjects of restlessness and anxiety, not to mention *the chances of catching cold, that is so frequent a source of leaky roofs.*"—*The Artisan*, August 4th, 1886.

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general that the Negroes of the Gold Coast made or chose their deities at will, and worshipped natural objects for themselves alone, and it would soon be repeated and perpetrated. Other travellers, coming to West Africa with preconceived notions upon the religious beliefs of the natives, would find, to their ideas, confirmation of them on every side; and, without inquiring into the origin and real meaning of the practices they had observed, would go away convinced that all they had ever heard or read of Negro fetishism was correct.

To show how easily one may misapprehend the notions of the natives on religious matters, I will, though it may appear egotistical, give an instance from my own experience. On my first visit to the Gold Coast, at the close of the year 1873, I inquired the object and intention of those trees surrounded by fences, which are to be found in every native town, and was told by Europeans having some experience of West Africa that they were "fetish" trees, which were considered sacred, and worshipped by the natives. I had heard of tree-worship before, and finding this form of worship mentioned in a great many works upon West Africa, no doubt remained in my mind but that these trees were really worshipped for themselves. Some months later on, however, I learned from English-speaking and Christianised natives, that the tree was not worshipped for itself, but because it was the abode of a god. To use their own words, "there was a devil in each tree," and the offerings of eggs, rum, and palm-oil were for the devil. This idea seemed fairly reconcilable with the first, and I concluded that

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it was the spiritualised tree that was worshipped. In this belief I remained for some years, until, having made myself acquainted with the language, and learned more of the general ideas of the natives upon religious matters, it occurred to me to inquire what had caused them to believe in the first instance that a god or spirit dwelt in the tree. The evidence I collected at once exploded my former theory, and I learned then for the first time, that the tree was merely planted to afford shade for a tutelary deity, that that deity was obtained from and appointed by one of the higher deities through the priests, and that the tree itself, apart from the deity, was an ordinary tree, and nothing more. This explanation was so much at variance with my former ideas, and with all I had heard and read upon the subject, that I received it with extreme caution; and it was only after a series of inquiries extending over some months, that I suffered myself to be convinced that I had at last arrived at the truth. But having succeeded in discovering seven distinct cases in which, owing to various causes, the *ehsudu* had been changed and the *Bohsŭm* removed to another part of the town, where new trees were planted for it; while the former shade trees remained in their old positions, but were now unenclosed, divested of their former sacred character and altogether disregarded; I was convinced, that the tree, of itself, possessed no sacred character. Still, my first opinion had not been formed hastily. Although it was the opinion generally held by Europeans, I had made numerous inquiries on my own account; and it was only after an acquaintance with the Gold Coast extending over some four or five

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years, that by a mere chance I was led to doubt its correctness. Nor was this the only time such a thing has happened to me. Time after time I have thought I have grasped the native idea concerning a religious matter, and have gone on working thereon, only to find, perhaps months afterwards, that I had misconceived it most materially, and had gone off completely on a wrong scent. In fact, a man who has only the acquired customs of human nature to guide him, constantly and necessarily fails to understand the ideas and motives of savages, until he has learned by practice the instincts of savage nature. How exceedingly likely then to be mistaken were those travellers and sailors, whose acquaintance with the Gold Coast was limited to a few weeks or months, and who apparently accepted without inquiry everything they were told!

In "Pinkerton's Voyages," vol. xvi., p. 493, is a passage which purports to be a communication made by a native to Bosman, and which runs as follows: "If any of us is resolved to undertake anything of importance, we first of all search out a god to prosper us in our designed undertaking; and going out of doors with this design, take the first creature that presents itself to our eyes, whether dog, cat, or the most contemptible animal in the world, for our god, or perhaps, instead of that, any inanimate object that falls in our way, whether a stone, a piece of wood, or anything else of the same nature. This new chosen god is immediately presented with an offering, which is accompanied with a solemn vow, that if he pleaseth to prosper our undertakings, for the future we will always worship and esteem him

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as a god. If our design prove successful, we have discovered a new and assisting god, which is daily presented with fresh offerings; but if the contrary happen, the new god is rejected as a useless tool, and consequently returns to his primitive estate. We make and break our gods daily, and consequently are the masters and inventors of what we sacrifice to."

Now it is upon such statements as this, which refers only to the Ga-speaking tribes of the Slave Coast, and is, I venture to say, incorrect even as far as they are concerned, that has been gradually built up the belief that the Negroes of the Gold Coast select at random any object for a god; and this passage itself, most misleading as it is, has been quoted by almost every scientific writer upon the subject of religion, while upon it theories have been based, and from it deductions have been made. Now either Bosman's informant deliberately deceived him, or Bosman altogether misunderstood him. The former supposition seems the more probable, for Bosman tells us that this Negro sceptic, who "ridiculed his own country gods," had "in his youth lived among the French, whose language he perfectly understood and spoke," and among whom he had "imbibed the principles of the Christian religion." I have little doubt but that this Negro, anxious to appear superior to his more superstitious fellow countrymen, and to greater advantage to his European acquaintance, thus epitomised the religious practices of the natives, suppressing all the explanatory causes.

According to this statement, anything may be taken at haphazard and deified, to be, perhaps, subse-

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quently discarded. Let us see how this agrees with that which we find to be the case on the Gold Coast at the present day. The deities of Classes 1 and 2 are not chosen at will, they are deified powers in Nature. Nor are those of Class 3 chosen at will, at all events by the people. It is doubtless true that in a limited sense one may say they are chosen at will, for the priest may select any insignificant object from the place of abode of a higher deity, and may present it to his dupes as possessing an indwelling god. But the people who worship it do not choose it, and the impostor who does choose it, being conscious of his own fraud, does not in his own mind elect it to the dignity of a god. He knows it to be a mere stick or stone, and he pretends to worship it for his own ends. The people believe it to be the abode of a god, who has been appointed to dwell therein by one of the higher gods. There is in this no haphazard selection of a god.

Similarly with regard to the deities of Class 4. As I have already said, I believe that the majority of persons possessing *ehsuhman* are impostors, who trade upon the fears of their neighbours, and who know very well that the power of the *suhman* is *nil*. Supposing, however, that a man does believe in it. A *suhman* is not obtained by chance, and a stone or a stick picked up anywhere cannot become one. The object must be taken from the dwelling of a Sasabonsum, and it is a spirit of a Sasabonsum that enters it. So, too, with the charms obtained from a *suhman*. People buy them from the possessor of a *suhman*, who makes them to sell. He, conscious of his imposture,

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does not worship them, and the people who do worship them do not select them. There is here, also, no haphazard selection of any commonplace object, which is, apparently without reason, then raised to the dignity of a god.

From this I think we may safely say that the belief that the Negroes of the Gold Coast take at random any ordinary object and invest it with the character of a god, is entirely without foundation, and that the above-quoted passage from Bosman, and others similar to it, are entirely incorrect as far as the Gold Coast is concerned—and, as far as my experience extends, as far as the whole of the Negro nations of West Africa are concerned. Certainly nothing of the kind, that I have been able to discover, exists at the present day; and we cannot suppose that such a condition as that described prevailed at the time Bosman wrote. There could not have been so radical a change that, in the short period of one hundred and ninety years, one form of religious belief or practice should have died out entirely, and should have been everywhere replaced by another, over a vast tract of country, amongst peoples living in semi-isolated communities in the midst of pathless forests, where there is but little opportunity for the exchange of ideas, and where we know they have been uninfluenced by any higher race.

I must confess that I do not believe that fetishism, as understood by the advocates of the necessity of a primordial fetishism, ever existed. I do not believe that man first gained or formed a conception of the existence of superhuman or supernatural powers from

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a stone or any such object which he picked up at random or by choice. Certainly if this theory be based upon the supposition of the existence of such a state of things amongst the Negroes of the Gold Coast, or of West Africa generally, it has, I think, no foundation whatever. Nor do I think that fetishism, the worship of tangible and inanimate objects, is at all characteristic of primitive peoples, or of races low in the scale of civilisation. It is arrived at only after considerable progress has been made in religious ideas, when the older form of religion becomes secondary, and owes its existence to the confusion of the tangible with the intangible, of the material with the immaterial; to the belief in the indwelling god being gradually lost sight of, until the power, originally believed to belong to the god, is finally attributed to the tangible and inanimate object itself.

So far from fetishism being peculiarly characteristic of the religion of the Negro of the Gold Coast, I am of opinion that that religion is remarkably free from it. Of the deities of Classes 1 and 2, many are unrepresented by any object, and in such cases there can be no confusion of ideas. The majority are represented by images, but the image is merely the emblem of an absent god, and no power is believed to reside in it. In Class 3 the god actually dwells in a tangible and inanimate object, and as many of these objects have been handed down from generation to generation, and are of some antiquity, it might be supposed that in some cases the idea of the indwelling god would be lost sight of, and the object worshipped for itself. Such, however, is not the case. The indwelling god

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cannot be lost sight of, because he so frequently manifests himself by leaving the object in which he ordinarily dwells, and entering the body of a priest. It is impossible for people who, at least once or twice a week, see, as they believe, priests and priestesses possessed by the deities, to lose sight of the individuality of their gods, and to confuse them with the objects in which they commonly abide. A town company has, say, a tutelary deity named Kwamina, who generally resides in a stone which is kept in a brass pan. It appears to me perfectly impossible that they should so confuse matters as to suppose that the stone itself, the tangible and material object, is the god; for they constantly have, as they believe, the evidence of their senses to the contrary. From time to time Kwamina enters into a priest. They see the priest convulsed, they hear a strange voice, the voice of Kwamina, proceeding from the priest, saying, "I, Kwamina, have come," and they hear also the predictions or instructions he utters. But all this time the stone is still in the brass pan, it has not changed its appearance, nor disappeared, neither has it moved or spoken; and the natives well understand that that which is speaking to them, that which causes the priest to be convulsed, is the god, the spirit, something distinct and apart from the stone, which has for the time being quitted the stone and entered the body of the priest. Priests and priestesses being frequently possessed by deities of the first, second, and third classes. the people, as far as these three classes are concerned, are prevented from lapsing into fetishism, from confusing the intangible with the tangible, by the very imposture of

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the priests, who, for their own purposes, are continually simulating possession, and thus keeping the fact of the individuality of the gods continually before the people. Hence, the Negroes of the Gold Coast are always conscious that their offerings and worship are not paid to the inanimate object itself, but to the indwelling god; and every native with whom I have conversed upon the subject has laughed at the possibility of it being supposed that he could worship or offer sacrifice to some such object as a stone, which, of itself, it would be perfectly obvious to his senses, was a stone only, and nothing more.

Now, in the case of the deities of Class 4, the possessors of *ehsuhman* may, generally speaking, be regarded as a sub-order of priests, since they are, I think, usually conscious of their own imposture. When they are not impostors, in the cases in which they deceive themselves, they do not appear to lose sight of the idea of the indwelling spirit: they do not forget that it is a spirit of Sasabonsum that wields the power, and not the wooden figure, or the cone of red earth in a brass pan. And this is because the action of the priesthood, with regard to the higher deities, keeps before their minds the idea of indwelling spirits. Similarly in the case of the charms obtained from a *suhman*, in which we more nearly approach fetishism. As the person who prepares and sells them says that a portion of the individuality of the *suhman* has passed into them, and as the idea is constantly kept before them in their daily life and associations, they have no opportunity of forgetting the spiritual part. Still, here fetishism may probably in some cases,

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especially where hereditary charms are preserved, be found; and but for the action of the priests in keeping alive the idea of the individuality of the higher gods, doubtless both *ehsuhman*, and the charms derived from them, would soon become fetishes, tangible and inanimate objects worshipped for themselves alone.

If we suppose that the priesthood should cease to simulate possession, that a religious reformer initiated a higher *culte*, or a superior race forced a higher religion upon the people, then we can understand how fetishism would arise. The more intelligent men of the nation might subscribe to the new or reformed religion, but the masses would, unless coerced, cling for a long time to their old faith. But if the priesthood had found it to their advantage to accept the new *culte*, or if they had been suppressed or destroyed, there would then be no one to simulate possession, and in course of time the idea of an indwelling god would be lost. Thus we find more fetishism amongst the Negroes of the West Indies, who have been christianised for more than half-a-century, than amongst those of West Africa; for side by side with the new religion have lingered the old superstitions, whose true import has become forgotten or corrupted. Hence the belief in Obeah, still prevalent in the West Indies, which formerly was a belief in indwelling spirits which inhabited certain objects, has now become a reverence or worship paid to tangible and inanimate objects, which of themselves are believed to possess the power to injure. In Europe itself we find evidence amongst the Roman Catholic populations of the South, that fetishism is a corruption of a former *culte*, rather than a primordial faith. The lower classes

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there, too civilised for such jugglery as simulated possession by priests, but not sufficiently civilised to dispense with tangible objects to which to address their prayers, have confused the intangible with the tangible, and believe that the images of their saints can both see, hear, and feel. Thus we find that Italian peasants and fishermen beat and ill-treat their images when their requests have not been complied with; and Spaniards, as I have myself seen more than once, will cover the faces of their images, or turn their faces to the wall, when they are about to do anything which they consider would be displeasing to them. These appear to be instances of true fetishism.

Along with the belief that fetishism is the chief characteristic of the religion of the Negroes of the Gold Coast has grown up a belief that they fancy they can coerce their gods, and force them to do what they wish. I have read also, in at least one book, that the natives beat their gods if their prayers are unanswered. To this I can only say that, after an experience of the Gold Coast extending over thirteen years, I have never heard of, much less witnessed, anything of the kind, although I have made inquiries in every direction. The idea of coercion as applied to a deity appears to me to be quite foreign to the mind of the Negro, who rather seeks to gain his ends by adulation and offerings. It is by propitiation and flattery, and promises of offerings and worship, that the deities are believed to be influenced. In return for worship and sacrifice a god extends his protection, which is immediately withdrawn if he be neglected, if he does not also inflict punishment for the neglect. These being the native ideas concerning the

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gods, it seems impossible to suppose that a Negro could ill-treat his deity. If ordinary neglect be punished by sickness and disaster, he must believe that some far greater calamity, if not destruction itself, would be the result of ill-treatment. Moreover, as the native of the Gold Coast firmly believes in the intangible individuality of his gods, it is difficult to see how he could suppose himself able to ill-treat them. As the object or receptacle in which a deity of the third class might dwell is, of itself, and without the god, an ordinary object, to beat that would not be of any effect, except perhaps to bring down condign punishment upon the man for the want of respect shown by the act. In the case of a fetish, where the two individualities are no longer separable, it is different; but before the stage of fetishism is reached, coercion of a god seems impossible. In any case, the Negroes of the Gold Coast so implicitly believe in the superhuman power of their gods, and hold them generally in such awe, that I am convinced no coercion is ever there attempted or even thought of. The testimony of all the natives I have consulted on this point seems to me conclusive.

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CHAPTER XIII.

OATHS, ORDEALS, OMENS, ETC.

To make an oath binding on the person who takes it, it is usual to give him something to eat or drink which in some way appertains to a deity, who is then invoked to visit a breach of faith with punishment. The ordinary plan is to take something from the spot in which the deity resides. Thus, in the case of a marine god, a little sea-water, or sea-weed from the rock or reef in which he dwelt, would be taken into the mouth and swallowed; in the case of the god of a river or lagoon, some of the water, or a fish from it, or some mud from the banks; and in the case of a god dwelling in a hill or tract of forest, a little earth, or some leaves or berries, from the locality inhabited by him. The natives term this, swearing by a god. Thus, to swear by Fohsu, the deity at the Salt Pond at Cape Coast, a calabash is filled with water from the Pond, and in it is placed a fish from it, or some leaves of an edible plant used by the natives as spinach, which grows at the edge of the water. The whole is stirred up in the calabash, and the person to be sworn drinks some of the fluid; while

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the person administering the oath calls upon Fohsu to punish the oath-taker should he at any time violate it.

The taking of such oaths has been called by the English in West Africa "eating fetish," a term which conveys anything but a correct idea of the practice, and which has misled several authors, amongst others Sir John Lubbock, who says: "In Whydah (Western Africa), and I believe generally, the Negroes will not eat the animal or plant which they have chosen for their fetish. In Issini (Assini), on the contrary, 'eating the fetich' is a solemn ceremony on taking an oath, or as a token of friendship."*

The manner of taking these oaths varies considerably, and to test the truth of certain particular statements, particular methods are adopted. Sometimes a *Bohsŭm*, or a charm derived from a *suhman*, though the latter is not considered so powerful an agent as the former, is placed in a calabash, and rinsed with a little water. A small quantity of rum is then poured upon the *Bohsŭm*, or charm, and the person administering the oath addresses it in words to the following effect: "I am going to give this to So-and-so to drink. If he speaks the truth, all will be well. But if he lies, make his belly swell, and make him die (or go mad) in so many days." The person to be sworn, who has been present during the preparation of the draught and this invocation, then drinks some of the water, swearing at the same time that he will speak the truth.

Should a man, on the death of a debtor, claim the amount of the debt from the estate of the deceased, and the family not be cognizant of the indebtedness,

* "Origin of Civilisation," p. 334.

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they wash the corpse with a little water, and the claimant then drinks some of it, swearing at the same time that he has truthfully stated his claim. The *sisa* of the deceased is in this case believed to punish, should a false oath have been taken.

Another preparation to ensure fidelity and truth on the part of the person sworn, is blood, either human or animal, mixed with scrapings of wood from the stool of a tribal chief. In this case the tutelary deity of the family of the chief avenges any infraction of the oath. The mixture of blood and wood-scrapings is termed *addŭm.*

In the western districts of the Gold Coast the procedure on taking oaths is sometimes varied, and instead of the person to be sworn eating or drinking something appertaining to a god, something belonging to him, such as a lock of hair, or nail-paring, is placed in the habitat of the god.

Persons never swear by a Sasabonsum, lest, if circumstances should cause them to violate their oath, they should be destroyed by him. The other deities, being less implacable, may, they think, be appeased under such circumstances by sacrifice; but only if the violation has been involuntary or unavoidable. A person swearing by a Srahmantin eats small pieces of the bark of a silk-cotton tree, in which a deity of this kind resides.

When a man charges another before a chief with a crime, and the evidence adduced is insufficient to establish the charge, the party making the accusation is required to take an oath as to the truth of his statement; and if the accused then in his turn takes

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an oath that he is innocent, he has to submit to a test or ordeal. Either he is compelled to drink a decoction of *odum* wood, or to chew a piece of *odum* wood, and afterwards drink a bowl of water. *Odum* is, it is said, a poison, but it also acts as an emetic and purge. If a person who has been subjected to this ordeal should vomit, he is considered innocent; if not, his guilt is established.

Ramseyer and Kühne have given an account of such an ordeal, which took place during their detention in Coomassie: "A rich heathen went to a mohammedan and asked him to bless his fortune. The moslem declined, saying that the money had been acquired wrongly and would soon be lost. A quarrel ensued and the two men parted, vowing never to speak to each other again. Some weeks passed, when the rich man's slaves again visited the mohammedan with the same request, *i.e.*, that he would bless their master's wealth. The moslem declared that notwithstanding his vow the rich man had sent his slaves to him; this the latter denied, and a worse quarrel ensued, in which the moslem called his enemy a liar and a deceiver. The Ashanti upon this took the great oath of the king that he was innocent, the other did the same; then followed the test. The Ashanti drank a large quantity of *odum* water, which caused him to swell fearfully, and he soon became sick. With a cry of joy the whole multitude rushed upon the mohammedan, dragging him to the block, where he was shortly afterwards beheaded."

It should perhaps be mentioned that the Mohammedan negroids from the various states on the Niger,

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a colony of whom has been established in Coomassie since the close of the last century, and who are now penetrating to the sea-coast in every direction, are generally believed to be possessed of occult powers. They make amulets, which they sell for considerable sums to the natives, prepare spells for various purposes, and magical draughts; and their blessing is believed to be as productive of good fortune as their curse is of the reverse. In the above case the man was executed, not for having falsely accused the Ashanti, which offence would be met by a fine, but for having, as shown by the result of the ordeal, falsely sworn the king's oath, an offence which is always punished with death.

This *odum* test is applied in almost all cases of denial of a serious offence. Just before the outbreak of the Ashanti war in 1873, the chiefs of Ashanti-Akim were reported to have sent warning to their relatives in Akim to be on their guard, as war was about to be made against them. The Ashanti king at once had the matter brought before the council (*Kotoko*); the chiefs of Ashanti-Akim pleaded not guilty, and were, in consequence, ordered to drink *odum* water, with the result that six of them were put to death.

A husband who suspects his wife of having been unfaithful to him, but is unable to prove it, while the wife strenuously denies her guilt, subjects her to an ordeal. He obtains from a priest, to whom he states the case, certain leaves, which, the priest informs him, possess medicinal or magical qualities. These leaves he mixes with water in a calabash, in the presence of his wife, while an earthen pot containing palm-oil

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is placed over a fire. When the oil is boiling the wife has to dip her hand in the water in which are the leaves, and then at once plunge it into the boiling oil. If the hand should sustain no injury, she is guiltless; but if it be scalded, she is guilty. Few wives knowing themselves to be guilty will stand this test. Generally they confess at the last moment, knowing that the beating that the husband will inflict will be more bearable than the pain of a scalded hand.

Another mode of discovering infidelity is similar to that described in the fifth chapter of Numbers. The accused woman is taken before a priest, who gives her a decoction of *odum* wood to drink; and as this draught is believed to have the power of bursting her belly if she be guilty, the fear of the consequences often leads to confession.

In the case of theft in a household, where the person robbed suspects the thief to be one of the household, he goes to the possessor of a *suhman* and obtains from him a needle, one or more of which are generally kept upon the *suhman* for this purpose. This needle he then thrusts through the tongue of each member of the household in succession, to discover the thief, it being believed that it will fail to pierce the tongue of the person who committed the theft. Before needles came into general use, the sharp thorns of the lime, which, it is said, were then used for sewing native cloth and skins, were similarly employed. If one person alone in the household be suspected, he or she is required to dip a hand into boiling water. If no injury is sustained, innocence is established.

It will of course have been seen that in all the fore-

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going the idea is to invoke the aid or interference of the deities. Their assistance is called in to render the consequences of the violation of an oath too terrible to be encountered; and in ordeals the burden of judgment, or of a decision, when human means are exhausted, is thrown upon them. In the latter case, as is well known, such practices long lingered in England, in the trials by battle, fire, and water; and a survival of the former idea may still be found in the form of oath administered in courts of law at the present day. But though the form of words invoking a deity has been retained, no one now believes or expects that perjury will be directly avenged by him. It is worthy of note, too, that just as it is necessary to take something belonging to or appertaining to the deities of the Gold Coast, at the time of swearing, to enable them to take cognizance of the oath; so, too, with us, the oath is taken upon the Bible.

Divination is practised by the priests in a variety of ways, they being guided merely by the caprice of the moment. A very common mode of divination is to throw palm-wine on the ground, future events being foreshadowed by the figures it forms. In case of a dispute between families, or in time of war, a method of ascertaining which party will get the better of the other, is to haul on a rope, fastened to a tree, till it breaks. While it is being pulled, the names of the contending parties are called out alternately; and the name which is called at the moment the rope breaks is that of the party which will gain the advantage.

Another mode of divination is to take up at random a handful of *enteh* nuts, and let them fall; the future

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course of events being foreshadowed by their number being odd or even. The same is sometimes done with pieces of leather, some of which denote good fortune, and some bad. If the former fall together, and the latter are more dispersed, good fortune will prevail; and, if the contrary, misfortune.

In Ashanti it is considered an ill omen for a male child to be born to an enemy in Ashanti territory. The birth of a female child is regarded as of good portent.

The cry of an owl heard near a house is believed to be prognostic of the death of one of the inmates. A common mode of signifying "owl" in conversation is the phrase: "The bird which makes one afraid." One of the words having the meaning "owl," is *pehtu*, and *pehtu-wuh*, literally, "Owl's death," is used to mean a sudden or violent death. This superstition, which appears to be almost universal, is doubtless due to the nocturnal habits of the bird, and its strange appearance and cry, as seen and heard in the gloom of night.

Amongst many races a sneeze is said to be regarded as an omen of impending evil; but amongst the Tshi-speaking tribes it seems to be rather regarded as an evidence of something unpleasant or painful having happened to the indwelling *kra*. Hence, as the well-being of the man is indissolubly bound up with that of his *kra*, it is usual for persons to address wishes of long life and good health to any one who has sneezed, with the idea of thereby averting any impending ill.

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CHAPTER XIV.

FAMILY DIVISIONS AND ANIMAL WORSHIP.

THERE does not appear to be any living creature which is sacred to or revered by the Tshi-speaking tribes as a whole, as the crocodile is by the Ga-speaking tribes; but there are several family divisions amongst the former, each of which has a special animal, bird, reptile, fish, or object, sacred to or revered by the members of the family division.

It is now very generally acknowledged that the origin of the worship or reverence paid to certain animals by different peoples may, in the majority of cases, be traced to that period when man had not learned to distinguish his fellows by special sounds invented for that purpose—to the period, in short, when there were no proper names, but when each individual was signified by an epithet descriptive of some characteristic. Such designations would most commonly refer to qualities which were analogous to those observed in animals, the only living creatures with which primitive man could form comparisons. Thus a swift runner might be termed "the antelope"; one cunning in stratagem, "the fox" or "the jackal"; another, fierce and cruel,

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"the leopard." The well-known case of the North American Indians furnishes an instance in which such designations are still used as names for individuals. In course of time the descendants of some noted chief who was known by some such title, and who had made that title sufficiently famous or terrible to be remembered, would forget the real origin of the family name, and would perhaps consider themselves the actual descendants of the animal itself. In more than one part of the globe this has actually happened. Although the immediate descendants of a man known as "the leopard" would know that by that title a man was meant, it is easy to understand how later generations might interpret the designation literally, and regard the animal itself with reverence as the founder of their family.

That the Tshi-speaking tribes formed in respect of this class of nomenclature no exception to the ordinary rule, is evident from the various family divisions which exist amongst them at the present day, such as the Buffalo, Leopard, Bush-cat, and Corn-stalk families. The practice of naming individuals after animals or natural objects having long become extinct among them, though it still lingers to the west of the Gold Coast, amongst the Assini tribes, the natives themselves are now, in the majority of cases, unable to assign any reason for these family divisions, and they are gradually becoming lost sight of altogether. But even at the present day, kings and chiefs still have names borrowed from living creatures bestowed upon them as additional titles, or "strong names." "O Elephant!" "O Lion!" is a very common mode of addressing a powerful ruler; and one of the titles of the King of Ashanti,

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enumerated on great state occasions, is *borri*, the name of a venomous snake.

With some races the reverence originally felt for the deceased ancestor, and in later times transferred to the animal after which he was named, culminates in the animal being regarded as a tutelary deity, and consequently a being to be worshipped and propitiated by sacrifice; but in other cases—and this is almost always the case with the family divisions of the natives of the Gold Coast—an abstention from the use of the flesh of the animal whose name the family bears, is sometimes the only remaining sign of any feeling of reverence or respect.

The following are some of the family divisions amongst the Tshi-speaking natives:

1. *Tchwiden-fo*, "Leopard Family" (*Ehtchwi*, Leopard).—The leopard is the real sacred animal of this family, but members of it now abstain from the flesh of all feline animals. Should a member of this family chance to come in contact with a dead leopard, he must, as a sign of respect and sorrow, scatter shreds of white cloth upon it, and anoint the muzzle of the animal with palm-oil.

2. *Unsŭnna-fo*, "Bush-cat Family."—The bush or civet-cat is the sacred animal of this family, and its flesh, together with that of animals nearly akin to it, such as the genet, must be abstained from.

3. *Kwonna-fo*, "Buffalo Family."—Members of this family abstain from the flesh of the buffalo.

4. *Intchwa-fo*, "Dog Family."—The flesh of the dog, esteemed a delicacy by the natives, may not be eaten by members of this family.

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5. *Annono-fo,* "Parrot Family."—The members of this family may not eat parrots.

6. *Abradzi-fo,* "Plantain Family."—In the interior, members of this family still abstain from the plantain, but in the south such an abstention is not now usual. This is perhaps due to the fact that the plantain is the principal article of food amongst the natives, and that consequently a prohibition of it would entail considerable inconvenience, and in some cases, hardship.

7. *Abrutu-fo,* "Corn-stalk Family."

8. *Appiadi-fo,* "Servant Family."

9. *Yoko-fo,* "Red-earth Family."—*Yoko* is the name given to the red, ochreous earth with which the northern tribes colour the lower part of the walls of their rooms and piazzas.

10. *Agona-fo,* "Palm-oil Grove Family."

11. *Abbahdzi-fo.*—The etymology of this word is uncertain. It may, perhaps, mean "Cannibal Family," and be compounded of *abbah,* "child," and *dzi,* "to eat."

12. *Dumina-fo.*—I have been unable to ascertain the meaning of this designation.

Tradition says that the whole of the Tshi-speaking tribes are descended from these twelve families, and this is borne out by the fact that members of them are found in tribes most widely separated. In fact, these twelve divisions are common to each one of the Tshi-speaking tribes. The first four in the above list are said to be the oldest families, and the remainder are considered as off-shoots, and inferior. Besides these twelve there are several other family divisions; but these are all local, have comparatively but few members, and are apparently of much more recent origin.

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Of these more recent ones there is, in some cases, a traditional account of the origin of the family division, and in such cases the founder of the family, from whom the name is derived, is always represented as an actual animal, bird, or fish, but possessing the power of assuming human shape at will. For instance, at the town of Chama, at the mouth of the River Prah, resides a family known as *Sarfu-n'ennam*, which is a name compounded of *sarfu*, "horse-mackerel," *n'*, a negative, and *ennam*, "fish," that is, "the flesh of fishes," and means, literally, "no Sarfu flesh." The founder of this family is believed to have been a *Sarfu*, and the following tradition concerning her is still extant:

A native of Chama, whose wife had recently died, was walking dejectedly along the beach towards the village of Aboánu, when he met a young woman, who asked him why he walked alone, and appeared so downcast. He told her the cause of his solitude, entered into conversation with her, and finally, captivated by her charms, asked her to take the place of the deceased and be his wife. She willingly complied, and, returning to his house with the man, lived with him. All went well for a time, but after some months she grew restless and uneasy; and at last she told her husband that she must go and see her relations. He offered no objection beyond stipulating that he should accompany her; but to this she would in no wise agree, saying that alone she had come and alone she must return. The husband protested against her going without him, and continued to press her for her reasons for refusing so natural a request. They were at the time walking upon the seashore, and at last, yielding to his entreaties, she said:

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"I will not allow you to go with me, because you would laugh at me when we returned." He declared that he would do nothing of the kind; and at last, he having first sworn that he would not afterwards allude in any way to her home or her relatives, she told him that her home lay in the sea, that her relatives were fishes, and that she herself was a fish. If, she said, he was still desirous of accompanying her, he was to count the breakers as they fell upon the shore, and to dive with her under the third one.

As the third wave dashed upon the beach she threw herself under it, and her husband following her, they both passed under the water, and after a time arrived at the spot where her relatives dwelt. There, being joyfully received by them, she told her tale, and introduced her companion as her husband. He was made welcome, and a house was prepared for him, outside of which, without any reason being assigned, he was strictly enjoined not to venture. He complied with this request for some days; but one night, seeing some young fishes at play, he went out to look at them more closely. He had scarcely left the house, however, before his wife's relations came to him and persuaded him to return to it. Three days later, seeing the young fishes again at play, he a second time left the house and went outside. Now, since he had taken up his abode in the sea the man had acquired some of the peculiarities of a fish, amongst others the emission of a phosphorescent light by night; and, approaching too near the surface of the water, he was perceived by some fishermen in a canoe, who immediately speared that which they believed to be an unusually fine fish. His wife's

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relatives, observing his danger, hastened to his assistance and endeavoured to drag him down to the bottom of the sea; but finding all their efforts unavailing, and that the fishermen were actually drawing him up to the surface, they begged a shark that was swimming by to bite the line that was attached to the spear. The shark immediately complied, and the man was once more at liberty. He was conveyed to the house, the spear was extracted, and, by means of dressings which were applied, the wound soon became healed. As soon as he had recovered, his wife's relatives, fearing that if he remained with them any longer some fresh accident would happen to him, sent him away with his wife, giving him as a parting gift the spear, which they charged him to keep carefully concealed.

Returning to the shore the two went back to their former abode, where the man carefully hid the spear in the thatch of the roof. The house they dwelt in was one of several, built in the form of a rectangle enclosing an open court, and other families dwelt in the other houses. In one of them lived the owner of the whole, and, some years after the return of the husband and wife from the sea, he determined to renew the thatch throughout. He commenced with the house occupied by this couple, and no sooner was the thatch removed than the spear was discovered. This, strange to say, was at once recognised and claimed by the landlord as his. He described the circumstances under which he had lost it, in throwing it at a large fish, and inquired of the man how it had come into his possession. The latter endeavoured to evade the question, but upon being accused of having stolen it, and being pressed to

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give some explanation, reluctantly narrated the whole adventure.

No evil consequences immediately ensued from this breach of his promise to his wife; but he had lately taken a second wife, and she, having one day quarrelled with the first wife, taunted her with being a fish. This so hurt her feelings that she determined to return to her home in the sea, and resume her former shape. She accordingly went to her husband, and upbraiding him with having revealed her secret, and for having insisted upon accompanying her to his home, expressed her determination to leave him for ever. "I can no longer live in a place," said she, "where I and my children will be continually laughed at and disgraced." In vain her husband endeavoured to dissuade her. Deaf to his entreaties, she ran down to the sea-shore; and, bidding him a last farewell, plunged into the sea with her youngest child in her arms. Her two elder children were left to the care of her husband; and from them are descended the *Sarfu-n'ennam* family, none of whom may ever eat *sarfu*, for the fish-woman was, when in the sea, a fish of that kind.

There is a very similar tradition concerning a family named *Appei*, belonging to the town of Appam. The story says that a man, named Insanna, who was the last of his race, was fishing with a casting-net amongst the rocks at night, bewailing his solitary lot and his inability to purchase a wife, when he caught a fine fish of the kind called *appei*. He waded to the shore with the fish in his net, and was about to kill it, when it spoke, saying: "Do not kill me. I will be a wife to you, and you a husband to me." The man, much surprised to

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hear a fish speak, refrained from killing it; and carrying it up to his house, left it there, while he returned to the beach to continue fishing. Some hours later, when he went back to his house, he saw a handsome young woman busying herself with the household work; who told him that she was the fish that he had caught, and that she had been sent to him by his deceased parents to be his wife. She told him that in future neither they nor any of their descendants must eat *appei*, or else they would have to return to the sea at once. The family, duly observing this prohibition, increased in course of time to such an extent that they occupied the whole country; which, after them, became known as Appei m', and later as Appam.

Besides the abstention from the flesh of certain animals, birds, fish, etc., by different families, such as has been already described, and which is a complete abstention at all times, one also finds upon the Gold Coast amongst certain families a fixed occasional abstention, as for instance, on one day of the week from a particular kind of food. This abstention originates in quite a different manner to the foregoing. When a family finds it necessary to separate, and perhaps to become split up into two or three sections, as the tutelary deity of the family can only remain with one section, and that the one to which the head of the family belongs, it is usual for all the members to assemble together, and a priest, after rinsing the tutelary deity in water in which he has placed some herbs, gives each member some of the fluid to drink. While they are so doing, the priest announces that it is the will of the god, that henceforth no one of

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the family shall ever partake of a certain article of food on a certain day or days, so that in years to come, the remembrance of their being under his protection shall not be lost. Usually it is only on one day out of the seven that the article of food mentioned by the priest is prohibited, and the ordinary day for such an abstention is Tuesday. Thus one continually meets persons, some of whom will not on Tuesdays eat eggs, others fowls, others plantains, and so on. In some cases, though but rarely, people are found who have to abstain from two kinds of food or more. This is due to a second family separation; but more generally, with the adoption of the second variety of abstention, the first is discontinued.

In Coomassie, vultures are considered birds sacred to the royal family, and must not be molested, any infringement of this law being punished with death. As far as I have been able to ascertain, it does not appear that the vulture is sacred to the royal family in the same way that the leopard is to the Leopard family; but rather that these birds have been despotically declared to be sacred, either through the caprice of a ruler, or on account of their value as scavengers. It is these loathsome birds that devour the corpses of persons sacrificed, which are always dragged to a swampy spot outside the town, called, from the number of vultures that are always seen perched, gorged, upon the surrounding trees, or fighting over their foul repast below, *Ehpatteh-sini*, "The place of vultures." There was originally a hollow at this spot, but it has long since become filled with human remains.

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In consequence of the royal edict, vultures fly over Coomassie in hundreds untouched, and are so bold as to pounce upon fish or meat carried on the head. Ramseyer and Kühne narrate a case of a woman who was on her way to the market with a basket of provisions on her head, when one of these voracious birds pounced upon it, and entangling its claws in the basket-work, was unable to extricate itself. The people around at once took advantage of this to pull out and make off with the large feathers of the wings and tail, which are much valued; and when the bird at last extricated itself, it was unable to fly. A general lamentation ensued, and the woman was at once carried off and put in irons, to be afterwards put to death.

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CHAPTER XV.

DIVISION OF AND MODE OF RECKONING TIME.

THE year is divided by the Tshi-speaking natives into two periods, one of which, called *Ahohbor Kakrabah*, or "The Little Hohbor," extends from May to August, and the other, called *Ahohbor Kassi*, or "The Great Hohbor," from September to April. These two combined make up a year of thirteen lunar months, called *affi-shiéh*, or *affi*, plural *infi*. The close of the *Ahohbor Kakrabah* is the usual time for offering the annual sacrifices to the local deities of Class 2.

The year is likewise divided by some of the northern tribes into twelve months of thirty or thirty-two days, the names of which are derived from the seasons, or from plantations; but these vary in different localities, and are not in general use. As the majority of the tribes reckon time by lunar months (*Bohsŭm*), and those tribes which divide the year into twelve months are the ones that have been most in contact with Mohammedans, it seems probable that that method of division was borrowed from them.

The lunar months are divided into four periods of seven days, which by a peculiar arrangement commence

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at different hours of the day. These periods are termed *n'ehsŭn*, "It is seven"; but, owing to their commencing at different hours, some may have eight days and six nights, others the reverse, and others seven days and nights, with a fractional part of a day or night.

The record of time is kept by the priests, who announce when the time for the annual festivals is at hand, and who have various methods of registering the lapse of time. One will be found mentioned in the description of the Deer Custom, in the next chapter.

Time is also reckoned by periods of forty or forty-two days, every fortieth or forty-second day being a festival, termed the Great Adae; eighteen or twenty days after which is the Little Adae. This is the more usual mode of reckoning time. The Adaes, like the *n'ehsŭn*, commence at different hours of the day. The Great Adae festival is always celebrated on a Sunday, and that of the Little Adae on a Wednesday. On the Great Adae people streak themselves with white, and wear white cloths, in sign of rejoicing; but in the towns on the sea-coast, where the inhabitants have been brought into contact with Europeans, the observance of the Adae festivals is fast dying out. This mode of reckoning time by periods of forty days is not peculiar to the Tshis alone. A very similar method is said to exist in Malabar, where time is reckoned by the Mandalam of forty days.

The division of the month into periods of seven days is no doubt due to the length of the lunar month, which has led the Tshis, as it has led many other peoples, to reckon the interval between new moons by halves and quarters, that is by fortnights (fourteen nights)

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and sennights (seven nights), called in modern times weeks. It is commonly supposed that the natives of the Gold Coast borrowed this mode of dividing time from the Mohammedan tribes of the interior. Mohammedan states were formed to the north of the forest country of the Gold Coast as early as the eleventh century of the Christian era, and the period of nine hundred years which has elapsed since then is perhaps sufficiently long to have allowed the new mode to become known throughout the entire country; especially as the priests, the recorders of time, would probably support the introduction of a system which would materially assist them in their calculations. But I do not think this is a borrowed custom. Although the natives now pay little or no attention to the motions of the heavenly bodies, that there was a time when the moon was regarded with reverence or awe is shown by the name, Bohsŭm, by which it is still known. I conceive that they ceased to regard it with reverence when they had learned its periodical recurrence, and knowing when to look for it, were no longer obstructed by its non-appearance. Having learned that a new moon appeared every twenty-eight days, to divide that period into halves and quarters was an obvious advantage. That this was the cause of the length of the week amongst ourselves is evident from the names "fortnight" and "sennight." Had these periods no reference to the appearance of the moon, they would be reckoned by seven and fourteen days instead of nights. A recent fable, seemingly invented to account for existing facts, ascribes the length of the week amongst the Tshi-speaking tribes,

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to the seven stars in the constellation of the Great Bear. This fable, however, is clearly of European design, and it is as inadequate to account for the week of seven days as are other fables of similar character which are in vogue amongst other peoples.

The names of the seven days of the week are as follows :

Monday	...	*Adjwo-da.*
Tuesday	...	*Ibna-da* or *Bna-da.*
Wednesday		*Wuku-da.*
Thursday	...	*Yaw-da.*
Friday	...	*Iffi-da.*
Saturday	...	*Memin-da.*
Sunday	...	*Kwasi-da.*

The termination *da* means " day," and the remainder of each word is a proper personal name, shortened, in the majority of cases, by the omission of two or three letters or a first syllable. Thus :

Adjwo-da	is	Kwadjo's day.
Ibna-da	,,	Kobina's day.
Wuku-da	,,	Kwaku's day.
Yaw-da	,,	Yow's, or Kwow's, day.
Iffi-da	,,	Kwoffi's day.
Memin-da	,,	Kwamin's day.
Kwasi-da	,,	Kwasi's day.

All these proper names are masculine, but the seven days of the week are divided into four feminine and three masculine, the latter being Wednesday, Saturday, and Sunday. The feminine days are considered lucky, and the masculine unlucky.

Perhaps these names of the days of the week are a survival of ancestor-worship, and the proper names

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those of distinguished chiefs, who in after years became semi-deified, just as our own names for days are derived from the gods of the Scandinavian mythology.

Every child, from the moment of birth, is given a name which is derived from the day of the week on which it is born. These are, for male children, as follows:

Monday	...	Kwadjo.
Tuesday	...	Kobina, or Kwabina.
Wednesday		Kwaku.
Thursday	...	Kwow, Yow, or Akkor.
Friday	...	Kwoffi.
Saturday	...	Kwami, Kwamin, or Kwamina.
Sunday	...	Kwasi.

And for female children as under:

Monday	...	Adua.
Tuesday	...	Abbena, or Arabah.
Wednesday		Ekua.
Thursday	...	Abbah, Ayabbah, Yabbah, or Yawah.
Friday	...	Effua, or Yah.
Saturday	...	Amma, or Ameminiwah.
Sunday	...	Akosua, Akwasibah, or Aysi.

Where two or more names are given for one day, some are peculiar to the northern and some to the southern tribes. In some cases, however, there is a name for a particular portion of a day. Thus, a girl born on a Sunday morning would be named Aysi, and one born on a Sunday afternoon or evening, Akosua.

The number forty, perhaps on account of the Adaes being reckoned by forty days, is considered particularly lucky, and the natives always endeavour to connect it with some important event. Certain days are

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considered lucky or unlucky, generally, it appears, on account of some great success or calamity having occurred on that day. On the unlucky days councils cannot be held, nor can troops march, or engage the enemy unless attacked. This explains the otherwise unaccountable delay which has always marked the progress of Ashanti invading armies. There are only the four lucky days of the week upon which they can march, and these are further limited by the recurrence of annual unlucky days. In the last war, although the Ashanti army left Coomassie on the 9th of December, it did not cross the Prah till the middle of the following month.

There are national and tribal lucky and unlucky days, and individuals also have days which they consider lucky and unlucky for themselves. Kwoffi Karikari considered Thursday an unlucky day, and would never commence any undertaking on a Thursday. Kidjo Monday, which falls early in February, is considered by the Ashantis the luckiest day of the year. Their most unlucky day is the anniversary of the Saturday on which Osai Tutu was slain in an ambush near Acromanti in 1731.

Different vocations have different days on which no work may be done. Thus, Tuesday is a day of rest for fishermen, and Friday for agriculturists. In the case of the former the custom is now accounted for by a tradition that the first fisherman, named Kwegia, chose Tuesday for a day of rest; but the real reason appears to be that in times long past Tuesday was the day sacred to the god of the sea, for it is now the day commonly sacred to the majority of the existing gods

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of the sea. Any fisherman who violated this rule was fined, and his fish were cast into the sea; but of late years the spread of Christianity and scepticism has caused this observation of Tuesday as a day of rest to fall into disuse.

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CHAPTER XVI.

RELIGIOUS CEREMONIES AND FESTIVALS.

Pitsi, "The sprinkling," is a ceremony held in times of scarcity to propitiate the gods of the sea and induce them to give an abundance of fish. It is performed by the women of the town or village, who, headed by a number of priestesses robed in white, sing and dance through the streets, waving green branches. The words sung are a short invocation to the gods, asking for fish, corn, and peace. An offering, consisting of corn-meal mixed with palm-oil, and termed by the natives *attor*, is scattered upon all the rocks and reefs which are the places of abode of the marine gods, and from this "sprinkling" the name of the ceremony is derived.

Toh-fo, "One lost," is a ceremony held when a person has met with death, and the body has either been destroyed or cannot be found; for instance, when a man has been burned to death and the body reduced to ashes, or when one has been drowned and the body cannot be recovered. A miniature coffin is made, covered with white cloth, and, in the latter case, is carried to the sea-shore. Rum is scattered on the waves, and the name of the deceased is called aloud

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three times, the mourners crying at the same time in a harmonious but melancholy chant: "We have sought for you, but cannot find you." Some sand from the beach is then placed in the coffin, some sea-water poured into it, and, with the usual lamentations, the coffin is buried, usually on the beach. In the case of a man destroyed by fire, some of the ashes of the burned body, or of the house in which it was consumed, are placed in the coffin with similar ceremonies.

In this ceremony a fragment of the corpse is always interred if possible; and, if no portion of it can be found, some earth, water, or other substance from the locality in which the death occurred. This custom appears to owe its origin to the belief that if respect be not shown to the deceased, by paying him the usual funeral honours, the *sisa* will come into the dwellings of the neglectful relatives, cause sickness, and disturb them by night. Consequently, no body being forthcoming, they perform the funeral rites over a substitute; taking care, however, to announce to the *srahman* of the deceased, or the *sisa*, that they have sought for the body in vain.

Deer Custom.—At Winnebah there is held, on the first or second Saturday in April, an annual festival, at which a live antelope is caught and offered to the tutelary deity of the town. This festival, which is commonly called the "deer custom," is said to have been originally practised at Mumford. A tradition says that in days long bygone an inhabitant of Mumford, named Simpun, migrated to Winnebah, and, being afterwards joined by other people from Mumford,

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founded there a town, which, after him, was called Simpah, by which name Winnebah is still known by the natives. These settlers returned to Mumford every year to take part in the deer custom; but after a number of years, when their community had increased to such an extent as to be more numerous than that of Mumford, they required the priests to remove the god in whose honour the ceremony was held, to Winnebah, founding their request upon the greater importance of their town. The people of Mumford naturally objected to this, but the men of Winnebah contrived to possess themselves of the god by stealth, and carried it off in triumph to their town. The superior strength of Winnebah prevented the Mumford people taking any forcible measures for its recovery; and, with the loss of the god, the deer custom ceased to be held at Mumford, but flourished at Winnebah instead.

Early in the morning of the day on which the ceremony is held, the two town companies of Winnebah, armed with stout sticks, proceed to their allotted posts; No. 1 Company to the bush at the back of the town, and No. 2 to the open country dotted with clumps of bush which extends to the sea-shore. Here they beat the bush for antelopes, each company striving to be the first to capture one alive, for to that company does the privilege of offering it to the god belong. Directly an antelope breaks cover it is assailed with blows, so that frequently several are killed in the struggle to capture them; but directly one has been taken alive the successful company, singing songs in honour of the god, repairs to a place at the outskirts

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of the town, called Abohsŭm-bah. To a tree there standing the antelope is taken and killed with blows. The hind legs are then cut off, smeared with palm-oil and red earth, and fastened to the tree. This tree, it appears, is sacred to the tutelary deity for whom the antelope is caught, and whose name is Pehnin-jinjan. Probably, in former times, the house in which the tutelary deity was kept, was near or under this tree; and the *Bohsŭm* has been removed to its present abode, a house in the town, because the open space surrounding the tree has become a kind of European quarter, and is the palm-oil market of Winnebah.

Pehnin-jinjan has a deputy (*brahfo*), named Penkari Otu, and to the house in which the latter dwells the remainder of the antelope is taken, and is placed on the ground surrounded by the skulls and fore-feet of the antelopes which have been sacrificed in past years, and which are carefully preserved with the other paraphernalia of Penkari Otu. There it remains until the afternoon of the next day, when the flesh is cut up and divided between the chiefs, head-men, and priests, while the head and fore-feet, anointed with palm-oil and red earth, are placed with the others. A subordinate *Bohsŭm*, named Awi, is then brought out, and is placed in an erect position upon a young palm-branch twisted into a circle, which is laid upon an inverted earthen pot. Thus placed, a very slight shock is sufficient to cause the *Bohsŭm* to fall. Three lines are then drawn on the ground close to the pot, one line being of chalk, another of red ochre, and the third of charcoal; and these being completed the priests close round, and raise loud shouts in honour of the god,

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until the vibration of the air causes the *Bohsŭm* to fall. If it falls near to the white line, it signifies that the coming year will be marked by intense heat and a scarcity of rain; if near the red, pestilence and disasters are impending; but if near the black line, a year of fruitfulness and plenty is at hand. This concludes the ceremony.

It is said that, every week, the priest of this god has to enter the house in which the *Bohsŭm* is kept, and wash himself with a new piece of that fibre which is used by the natives as a sponge. The fibre he has used he leaves in the house, until there are four pieces, when he makes a knot in a piece of cord; and it is after thirteen such knots have been made, that he announces that the time for the deer custom has again come.

Mohbor-meh.—In time of war, the wives of the men who are with the army paint themselves white, decorate themselves with beads and charms, and make a daily procession through the town, invoking the protection of the gods for their absent husbands. This ceremony is called *Mohbor-meh*, a word compounded of *mohbor*, "pity," and *meh*, "me," and which may be freely translated, "Have mercy upon us." Besides the daily procession, *Mohbor-meh* women, painted white from head to foot, dance publicly in the streets, uttering howls and shrieks, leaping and gesticulating, and brandishing knives and swords. On the day upon which a battle is expected to take place, they run to and fro with guns, or sticks roughly carved to represent guns, and pierce green paw-paws with knives, in imitation of the foemen's heads. This ceremony is generally

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performed in a complete state of nudity, and frequently some of the principal women appear with two hen's eggs fastened above the *pudenda*. Any man, except the aged and infirm, who may be discovered in the town or village, is at once assailed with torrents of abuse, charged with cowardice, taunted with a want of manliness, assaulted with sticks, and driven out of the town. *Mohbor-meh* women appear to be regarded in some respects as female warriors, who guard the town during the absence of the men. As may be imagined, the appearance presented by a number of naked women of a dead-white colour, bounding, leaping, gesticulating, and uttering the most unearthly cries, is most peculiar.

Affirah-bi.—Towards the end of the month of August, eight days before the termination of the *Ahohbor Kakrabah*, is held the festival termed *Affirah-bi*, when a general remembrance of the dead is observed throughout the land. At an early hour in the morning, long before dawn, wailings and lamentations for those relatives who have died within the past two or three years, break from every house, and continue for some hours after daybreak, when each family proceeds to the place of burial of its dead. They sit down around the graves, and laying upon them offerings of fowls, eggs, rum, and palm-wine, call upon the *asrah-manfo* of the deceased to accept their offerings, and pray them to protect the family from misfortune. The elders then recount the gallant deeds of the deceased, extol their valour and estimable qualities, and point out to the young the necessity of emulating such illustrious examples, so that their memories may be equally honoured, when they too shall have departed to

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Srahmanadzi. Rum, with *attor*, is then sprinkled on the graves, and the people return to their homes, where for the next seven days a festival is kept up. The whole eight days are termed *egwah awotchwi*, "Eight Seats," because it is a period of rest, during which no work may be performed. The rich, prosperous, and powerful, called *oman 'na*, in full *oman enna*, meaning, literally, "mothers of the tribe," are expected to make munificent offerings to the dead, and to treat the poorer classes generously. Should they fail in this duty, it is believed that no child will be born in the family that has been guilty of neglect during the next *hohbor*. At the termination of the *egwah awotchwi*, all the commoner utensils that have been used during the festival, such as calabashes and earthen pots, are carried out before daybreak on the ninth day, and thrown away, the new *hohbor* being commenced with new articles.

Adae Festivals.—On the Great and Little Adae festivals, it is customary to offer sacrifices to the tribal and national deities, the chiefs and men of rank offering human victims, and the poorer classes sheep and poultry. The festivals last three days. In Coomassie, the commencement of an Adae feast is announced by the beating of the large state drum at sunset; and, upon this signal being heard, shouts, songs, and discharges of musketry break out from all quarters of the town. The Ashanti Government has utilised these festivals for the purpose of keeping up a species of surveillance over all strangers in the capital. About six days before the Adae the king holds a palm-wine festival, at which every stranger in Coomassie is bound to pay his respects in person to

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the king, receiving in return a jar of palm-wine, or some other small present. On the Adae itself the king visits the buildings within the palace enclosure, where the stools of the former kings are preserved, and sprinkles them with palm-wine, or with the blood of sheep and fowls, which are killed and cooked for the *asrahmanfo* of the deceased monarchs. Blood is also poured upon the stool of the dynasty. This duty accomplished, the king then proceeds with his chiefs, preceded by bands of music, to a part of the city called *Mogya-woh*, literally, "The blood dries." Here he seats himself, surrounded by his chiefs, and strangers again present themselves, and are treated with palm-wine.

Yam, or Harvest Festivals.—These appear to be festivals held for the purpose of returning thanks to the gods for having protected the crop. These are apparently two; one held in September, when the yam crop is ripe, and another, called *Ojirrah*, in December, when it is planted. A minor festival, called *Affi-neh-dzea-fi*, which is held in April, appears, however, to be of the same nature. The September festival lasts a fortnight, and is commenced by a loud beating of drums. It is called by the Ashantis *Appatram*, and no new yam may be eaten by the people till the close of the festival. On the first and fifth days the people fast, but drink immoderately; and the king and chiefs distribute brandy and rum to their followers. On the fifth day a criminal is sacrificed, sent as a messenger to the deceased kings, and the king eats new yams. On the eighth day a fresh distribution of spirits takes place, and on the day before that which closes the festival, the king

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again eats new yams, after which the people are allowed to make use of the new crop. Certain days of the festival are days of purification, on which the people sprinkle themselves with water, processions are formed in honour of the protecting deities, and human sacrifices offered. At the December festival new yams are also eaten, and sacrifices made to, and processions formed in honour of the gods. It is customary to slay some of the human victims at a yam plantation, in order that some blood may flow into the hole whence the new yam was taken.

At the close of the yam customs, the king usually proceeds to the abodes of the chief local deities, such as the River Dah, and the swamp to the north-east of Coomassie, each of which is believed to be inhabited by a powerful god who covers the approach to the capital. Sheep are sacrificed at the water-side, and the king then bathes. In this he is generally followed by his chiefs and a large concourse of people, the notion being that some of the virtue of the stream sacred to the god, passes into their bodies and strengthens them. The king then returns to the palace with a procession. Large earthen jars filled with water from the sacred spots are borne upon the heads of slaves, and the priests, dipping branches into them, sprinkle the crowd from time to time. Sometimes, instead of proceeding to the places of abode of the local deities, the king has water from their streams or pools brought to the palace. In this he washes, and it is afterwards poured into brass basins for the use of the chiefs. On this day, the last of the festival, the king's wives, and the ladies

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of the court, proceed in procession through all the principal streets of the city.

The Ashantis have utilised these festivals politically, and on one of them the chiefs of the various provinces, and those of the tributary states, repair to Coomassie, and renew their oath of allegiance. This portion of the ceremonies, having no religious significance, is included in the chapter on state ceremonies.

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CHAPTER XVII.

CEREMONIES AT BIRTH, MARRIAGE, AND DEATH.

(1) *At Birth.*

As soon as a woman discovers herself to be pregnant she offers sacrifice to the tutelary deity of the family, and a priestess binds charms about her wrists, ankles, and neck, at the same time invoking the god to avert ill-fortune. These charms consist of strings of the black and white beads used by the priesthood, and, unless this ceremony was performed, the childbirth would be believed to be unfortunate.

When the time is approaching, the wife usually quits her husband's house and returns to that of her mother, whose advice and assistance is required at this period; and during the act of parturition she remains seated on a country stool, surrounded by a number of female visitors, before whom it would be considered exceedingly disgraceful to utter any cry of impatience or pain. From the moment of its birth the child takes a name, which is derived from the day of the week on which it is born. The child, after having been washed, has charms bound round it to avert misfortune.

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After childbirth the mother is considered unclean for seven days, during which she can touch nothing without rendering it also unclean. At the expiration of this period she may occupy herself with her ordinary domestic avocations, but she may not go about the town, or visit friends, till three months have elapsed, when she makes offerings to the tutelary deity of the family; and then, attired in her best cloths, and covered with gold ornaments, she pays visits to her friends and neighbours, accompanied by a band of singing women who sing songs of thanksgiving for her safe delivery. In such songs gratitude is expressed, not only to the tutelary deity but also to all the inhabitants of the town or village; for the natives regard the fact of her recovery and immunity from misfortune as proof that no one has wished harm to befall her, or has invoked the anger of a *suhman* upon her.

Eight days after the birth, the father of the newborn child proceeds with some of his friends to the house where the mother is, and they there seat themselves in a circle in front of the entrance. The child is then brought out and handed to the father, who returns thanks to the tutelary deity, and then gives it its second name, squirting at the same time a little rum from his mouth into the child's face. This second name, which is always used after the first, is generally that of a particular friend or deceased relative. Supposing such a name to be Mensah, and the child, a male, to have been born on a Sunday, his full name would be Kwasi Mensah. After the second name has been given, rum is poured upon the ground as an offering to the *asrahmanfo* of its ancestors, sacrifices are

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made to the tutelary deity, and the day concludes with festivities.

It is said that in former times male infants always had for a second name that of the maternal grandfather, and females that of the maternal grandmother. This is partially corroborated by Bosman.*

Should the mother die in childbirth and the child itself be born alive, it is customary to bury it with the mother. This custom, like all affecting human life, has ceased to exist within the Colony, but is still in force amongst the independent tribes. The idea seems to be that the child belongs to the mother, and it is sent to accompany her to *Srahmanadzi*, so that her *srahman* may not grieve for it.

Until very recently it was customary in parts of Ahanta for the tenth child born of the same mother to be buried alive. This practice was unknown elsewhere on the Gold Coast, and as in those parts of Ahanta in which it prevailed, a dialect of another language than the Tshi is still spoken in several families, it seems probable that it is a survival of a custom of an older people, who were dispossessed by the Tshi-speaking tribes.

(2) *At Marriage.*

When a girl arrives at the age of puberty, usually in the eleventh or twelfth year, she is taken to the water-side by others of her sex, and washed. At the same time an offering, consisting of boiled yam, mashed and mixed with palm-oil, is scattered upon the banks of the stream by the members of her family, who call upon

* "Pinkerton's Voyages," vol. xvi., p. 423.

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the local gods, and inform them that the child has reached a marriageable age. In Cape Coast the girl is taken to the rock of the goddess Ichar-tsirew, and there washed. After the washing, a bracelet, consisting of one white bead, one black, and one gold, threaded on white cord, is put on the girl's wrist. These three beads in conjunction are termed *abbŭm*, and their being taken into use is a sign to the *Sassŭr* that its protecting care is no longer required. In the interior, on such occasions, girls are streaked with white.

The natives seem to judge of a girl's fitness for the married state rather by the development of the bosom, than by the fact of menstruation having commenced; for if it be not developed at the time of performing the above ceremony, they wait until it becomes so before taking the next step, which is for the purpose of announcing her eligibility for marriage to the men of the community. The girl is carefully adorned with all the ornaments and finery in the possession of the family, and frequently with others borrowed for the occasion. A silk cloth, in place of the ordinary cotton one, extends from the waist to the ankle, and is carefully arranged over a neatly-made *attohfo*, a kind of bustle made of rolled cloth, on which infants are carried, and which is kept in position by being attached to the girdle of beads worn by all females. The silk cloth is kept in position by a silk handkerchief, which is tied over it, round the waist. The hair is covered with gold ornaments; necklets, armlets, and anklets of gold and aggry beads encircle her neck, arms, and ankles; and her bosom and the upper part of her body, which is left uncovered, is marked with white clay in very fine lines.

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Of course a girl thus attired would be a daughter of a wealthy family; but even the poorest people contrive to make some show on these occasions. Thus decorated, the virgin is escorted through the streets by a number of young people of her own sex, one of whom usually carries an open umbrella over her; while the remainder sing a song in honour of her maidenhood, and inform the men that their friend is now of a marriageable age. As the natives of the Gold Coast are a far handsomer people than any other Negro race with which I am acquainted, and possess usually superb figures, and an erectness of carriage which is no doubt due to the habit of carrying articles on the head, there is frequently something very attractive about these young girls, who, in their unconstrained and graceful movements, seem overflowing with youth and health.

Shortly after a virgin has thus advertised herself, she is married. Perhaps she had previously been betrothed; but, if not, the public advertisement of her charms and marriageable condition seldom fails to produce suitors. If the girl's family agree to the match, the amount to be paid for her is handed over by the suitor, and he at once prepares a marriage festival. Rum, gin, and other intoxicants, together with tobacco and pipes, are sent by him to the family of the bride, for distribution amongst their kinsmen and intimate friends, and in notification of the approaching happy event. Sometimes it is announced with greater pomp, by means of a long train of people, bearing provisions of all kinds upon their heads, who parade through the town, singing songs in honour of the occasion. These preliminaries having been completed, the bride is led to

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the house of the bridegroom, where a feast is prepared for the friends of both families, who keep up an orgie until long after the husband has retired to his wife. Next morning, if the husband be satisfied concerning his wife's purity, he sprinkles her over the head, shoulders, and breast with a thick powdering of dried white clay; and sends her to parade the streets, accompanied by a number of young girls, who sing songs in her honour. The day following, her life as a married woman commences. Should the husband be in doubt as to the virtue of his bride, he may, under certain conditions, repudiate her. The procedure in such cases will be found fully described in the chapter on Laws.

(3) *At Death.*

When the head of a family is conscious of approaching death, he summons his relatives to his death-bed, and instructs them as to the disposition of his property; being careful to recount the names of his pawns and slaves, the amounts for which he holds the former, and the sums due to him from his debtors. No sooner has the breath left the body than a loud wailing cry bursts forth from the house, and the women rush into the streets with disordered cloths and dishevelled hair, uttering the most acute and mournful cries. The body is then carefully washed, dressed in the richest cloths, and adorned with gold ornaments and beads. Thus attired, it is either placed lying down, as if asleep, or is propped up seated on a country stool, where it receives the visits of those who come to the funeral. The house is filled with a crowd of female relations, friends, and

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neighbours, who join in the universal lamentations, and, addressing the corpse, reproach him for having left them, or beseech his *srahman* to watch over and protect them. All the most valuable articles belonging to the deceased are placed round the corpse, and the dish that was most preferred in life is prepared and placed before it; the wailing being interrupted every now and then, to allow the widows to entreat the deceased to eat or drink.

During this the men sit outside, conversing amongst themselves in low tones, and receiving the presents which the friends and acquaintances of the deceased are expected to make at such a time. These presents consist of money or gold-dust, gunpowder, rum, gin, cloths, and food of various kinds; and each party as it arrives with presents, commences a rapid discharge of musketry, accompanied by the beating of drums, which is kept up until their ammunition is expended.

It is commonly supposed that this custom of firing guns at such times arose from an attempt to imitate the custom at European military funerals; but this scarcely seems to account for a practice which prevails equally in the far interior and on the sea-coast, nor can the firing of guns at festivals and holy days so be accounted for. It seems that some two centuries ago, both in England and the Colonies, it was customary to celebrate every important event by discharges of musketry. In 1655, the Virginia Assembly, in order to check the waste of powder, ordained that no persons should "shoot guns at drinkeing (marriages and funeralls onely excepted)," and there was an early custom of firing volleys at the grave of a person of note, even when the deceased was a woman. It may be that the native custom of dis-

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charging guns on all festivals and important occasions is derived from this old English custom, which now survives only in military funerals; but the noise produced by discharges of musketry seems alone sufficient to account for the practice, noise being one of the chief objects on such occasions.

From the moment of death, the relatives of the deceased, and the members of the household, abstain from food, and continue fasting as long as their strength permits. While so fasting they drink large quantities of spirits, so that at funerals the greater number of the mourners are commonly in a state of intoxication. At the death of a chief, it is customary for his successor to proclaim a fast of two or three days, to be observed by all the inhabitants of the town; and during this period he supplies them with drink. Amongst the northern tribes fasting does not mean a complete abstinence from food, it being permissible to eat roast plantains, bread-fruit, or other fruits during a fast.

The length of the wake depends upon the wealth and rank of the deceased, but the body is very rarely kept unburied for more than three days, and ordinarily it is buried on the day following decease. Amongst the southern tribes the grave is dug in the earthen floor of one of the rooms of the house; but of late years this practice has, for sanitary reasons, been prohibited in the towns on the sea-coast. The Ashantis, and some others of the northern tribes, bury their dead outside, and the body is taken out of the house through a hole which is made in the wall, for a corpse may not pass through any door.

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This superstition appears to have been borrowed from the Mohammedan peoples inland, for it is held by the Fulas, Houssas, Dagombas, and others, and also by the Mandingos and Jolloffs far to the north; while it is unknown to the southern Tshi-speaking tribes.

The coffin, which is made large on purpose, contains, besides the corpse, a considerable quantity of valuable property. In the case of wealthy persons, numerous rich and expensive silk cloths and handkerchiefs, gold-ornamented pipes, and gold-studded sandals, are placed beside the body, the arms of which are adorned with strings of nuggets and aggry beads, while not uncommonly the entire body is powdered with gold-dust. These valuables constitute, as it were, an outfit for the *srahman* of the deceased; and their value, in the case of chiefs or persons of distinction, not unfrequently amounts to some £200 or £300. Rum, food, and tobacco are also interred in the coffin for the use of the *srahman*.

The coffin having been deposited in the grave and the earth filled in, sacrifices of fowls, sheep, or bullocks, according to the wealth of the family, are made upon the grave; guns are fired, rum is distributed with a lavish hand, and the day terminates in drunkenness and debauchery. In wealthy families these saturnalia often last for weeks. Nor are the ceremonies for the dead confined to the days succeeding the decease, for, in the case of a man of rank, they are repeated at stated intervals a second and a third time, while food and palm-wine are placed daily on the grave for some months. It should perhaps be stated that the spirits of the fowls, sheep, etc., sacrificed on the grave, are

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believed to accompany the *srahman* on his journey to *Srahmanadzi*, just as is the case with human victims.

Those persons who have touched the corpse are considered unclean; and, after the interment, they proceed in procession to the nearest well or brook, and sprinkle themselves with water, which is the ordinary native mode of purification.

The nearest relations of the deceased, of both sexes, shave the head and all hair from their bodies. This has commonly been regarded as a sign of grief; but having in view the shaving of the head by women on the sacred days of deities, which are days of rejoicing, it appears rather to be a sign of respect, or an offering—in the case of a death, an offering to the *sisa* or *srahman* of the deceased.

On the day following that on which the ceremony terminates, the relations of the deceased, dressed in dark blue cloths, go round the streets singing a song of thanks to those who have assisted them by contributions towards the funeral expenses. It should be remarked that it is a point of honour amongst all but the most abjectly poor, to make a great display at funeral ceremonies; and families endeavour to outvie each other in extravagance. This is a common cause of debt and slavery, and poor people frequently pawn or enslave themselves in order to obtain the means of making a respectable funeral.

It is usual for widows to remain in the house, watching the grave, for several weeks after the death of a husband; during which time they neglect their persons, and partake but sparingly of food. Some months after the death the widows offer sacrifice to

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the tutelary deity of the family, to remove ill-fortune; and it is considered exceedingly unfortunate for a widow to have intercourse with a man before performing this rite; while the man who thus transgresses is believed to be inevitably doomed to fall a victim to the wrath of the *sisa* of the deceased.

The whole of the foregoing applies equally to the ceremonies held at death in the Colony and beyond its boundaries. Outside the Colony, however, where human sacrifices have not been suppressed, human victims form a considerable item in the list of offerings. Directly the breath has left the body, several domestic slaves are seized and put to death; the number depending, of course, upon the rank and wealth of the deceased. Consequently, when a man of rank is considered to be dangerously ill, it is not unusual for the slaves to hide themselves in the forest; returning to the house when their master has recovered health, or, should he have died, when the funeral ceremonies have terminated. The first outbreak of lamentation in a house is ordinarily followed by a general flight of all the household slaves, and, in consequence, the death is sometimes concealed for a short time, in order that the victims may be seized unsuspectingly. Any destined for sacrifice, who may escape, are at once replaced by others, who are bought for the purpose, or presented by friends. Throughout the funeral ceremonies human victims are sacrificed, and several are slain and thrown into the grave; but this has already been sufficiently described in the chapter on human sacrifices.

At the death of a king of Ashanti, the male members

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of the royal family, simulating frenzy, rush out into the streets and discharge their muskets at all persons whom they may chance to meet. During this first outburst of grief, Ashanti custom permits a prince to take the life of any subject, whether freeman or slave; but the princes generally exercise a wise discretion in this matter, and do not in their frenzy slay members of families which are sufficiently powerful to avenge them. Sometimes, however, accidents do happen. In 1867, when Kwaku Duah died, a nephew of the Ashanti general, Asamoa Kwanta, was slain, it was supposed inadvertently, by one of the excited princes. Asamoa Kwanta at once took up arms, and threatened to destroy Coomassie; nor could the insurrection be quelled till the prince who had slain his nephew, and two of his sisters, had been surrendered to and slain by the old general in revenge.

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CHAPTER XVIII.

STATE CEREMONIES.

In the Gold Coast Colony, where the native chiefs have for some years ceased to possess any real power, State and political ceremonies have gradually fallen into desuetude, until scarcely one is observed beyond that held at the entrance of a distinguished visitor into a town; but beyond the colonial boundaries, especially in Ashanti, where the political system has reached the highest stage of development, they still possess a significance and importance.

Reception of a Visitor.

A man of rank on approaching a native town is expected to send messengers in advance, to announce his speedy arrival and the hour of his proposed entry, in order that the chief and townspeople may have time to prepare to receive him with the customary honours. Sometimes, in Coomassie almost always, a message is returned that the visitor cannot be received on the day he has proposed; and visitors are not unfrequently detained in the

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villages in the vicinity of the Ashanti capital for some days, if not weeks, before the king announces that he is ready to receive them. This intelligence is conveyed by a sword-bearer, and the visitors, formed in procession, are led to the market-place by a circuitous route, amid the beating of drums, firing of guns, and blowing of horns. There they pass in procession before the king or chief, who then, in his turn, passes in review with his following before his visitors. As the reception is the same in character both in and beyond the Colony, merely differing in degree of pomp according to the wealth and power of the chief of the town visited, it will be sufficient to give an account of a reception held at Coomassie, merely premising that those held elsewhere are on a much smaller scale.

In the spring of the year 1817, Mr. Bowdich, a writer in the service of the Royal African Company, which then held possession of the British forts on the Gold Coast, was sent on a mission to Coomassie, and the following is the account which he has left of his reception there.*

"Upwards of 5,000 people, the greater part warriors, met us with awful bursts of martial music, discordant only in its mixture, for horns, drums, rattles, and gong-gongs were all excited with a zeal bordering on frenzy to subdue us by the first impression. The smoke which encircled us, from the incessant discharges of musketry, confined our glimpses to the foreground, and we were halted whilst the captains performed their Pyrrhic dance, in the centre of a circle formed by their warriors, where a confusion of flags, English,

* "Mission from Cape Coast Castle to Ashanti." London : 1819.

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Dutch, and Danish, were waved and flourished in all directions, the bearers plunging and springing from side to side, with a passion of enthusiasm only equalled by the captains, who followed them, discharging their shining blunderbusses so close that the flags were now and then in a blaze, and emerging from the smoke with all the gesture and distortion of maniacs. Their followers kept up the firing around us in the rear.

"The dress of the captains was a war-cap, with gilded ram's horns projecting in front, the sides extended beyond all proportion by immense plumes of eagle's feathers, and fastened under the chin with bands of cowries. Their vest was of red cloth covered with fetishes and saphies* in gold and silver, and embroidered cases of almost every colour, which flapped against their bodies as they moved, intermixed with small brass bells, the horns and tails of animals, shells and knives; long leopards' tails hung down their backs over a small bow covered with fetishes. They wore loose cotton trousers, with immense boots of a dull red leather, coming halfway up the thigh, and fastened by small chains to their cartouch or waist-belt; these were also ornamented with bells, horses' tails, strings of amulets, and innumerable shreds of leather; a small quiver of poisoned arrows hung from their right wrist, and they held a long iron chain between their teeth, with a scrap of Moorish writing affixed to the end of

* Bowdich uses the word "fetish" here in its common acceptation on the Coast. He means, in this case, amulets or charms. Saphies are amulets prepared and sold by the Mohammedans. They consist of scraps of writing, usually verses of the Koran, sewn up in leather cases, and sometimes covered with gold.

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it. Small spears were in their left hands, covered with red cloth and silk tassels, their black countenances heightened the effect of this attire, and completed a figure hardly human.

"This exhibition continued about half-an-hour, when we were allowed to proceed, encircled by the warriors, whose numbers, with the crowds of people, made our movement as gradual as if it had taken place in Cheapside; the several streets branching off to the right presented long vistas crammed with people, and those on the left hand being on an acclivity, innumerable rows of heads rose one above another. The large open porches of the houses, like the fronts of stages in small theatres, were filled with the better sort of females and children, all impatient to behold white men for the first time; their exclamations were drowned in the firing and music, but their gestures were in character with the same. When we reached the palace, about half-a-mile from the place where we entered, we were again halted, and an open file was made, through which the bearers were passed, to deposit the presents and baggage in the house assigned to us. Here we were gratified by observing several of the caboceers* pass by with their trains, the novel splendour of which astonished us. The bands, principally composed of horns and flutes, trained to play in concert, seemed to soothe our hearing into its natural tone again by their wild melodies; whilst the immense umbrellas, made to sink and rise from the jerkings of the bearers, and the large fans

* This is not a native word. It is a corruption of the Portuguese *cabeceiro*, "head-man," and is as unknown to the natives as the word "fetish."

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waving around, refreshed us with small currents of air, under a burning sun, clouds of dust, and a density of atmosphere almost suffocating. We were then squeezed, at the same funereal pace up a long street to an open-fronted house, where we were desired by a royal messenger to await a further invitation from the king.

"Here our attention was forced from the astonishment of the crowd to a most inhuman spectacle, which was paraded before us for some minutes; it was a man whom they were tormenting previous to sacrifice; his hands were pinioned behind him; a knife was passed through his cheeks, to which his lips were noosed like the figure of 8; one ear was cut off and carried before him, the other hung to his head by a small bit of skin; there were several gashes in his back, and a knife was thrust under each shoulder blade; he was led with a cord passed through his nose by men disfigured with immense caps of shaggy black skins, and drums beat before him; the feeling this horrid barbarity excited must be imagined.* We were soon released by permission to pass to the king, and passed through a very broad street, about a quarter of a mile long, to the market place.

"Our observations *en passant* had taught us to conceive a spectacle far exceeding our original expectations; but they had not prepared us for the extent and

* The Ashantis always contrive some such spectacle for strangers, their object being, apparently, to strike terror. When Governor Winniett visited Coomassie in 1848, a man, dying on a rack, was carried past as if by accident; and in March, 1869, the bloody head of a man who had just been slain, was placed before the messenger of the then Governor, Mr. Simpson.

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display of the scene which here burst upon us: an area of nearly a mile in circumference was crowded with magnificence and novelty. The king, his tributaries, and captains, were resplendent in the distance, surrounded by attendants of every description, fronted by a mass of warriors which seemed to make our approach impervious. The sun was reflected, with a glare scarcely more supportable than the heat, from the massive gold ornaments which glistened in every direction. More than a hundred bands burst at once on our arrival, with the peculiar airs of their several chiefs; the horns flourished their defiances, with the beating of innumerable drums and metal instruments, and then yielded for awhile to the soft breathings of their long flutes, which were truly harmonious; and a pleasing instrument, like a bagpipe without the drone, was happily blended. At least a hundred large umbrellas, or canopies, which could shelter thirty persons, were sprung up and down by the bearers with brilliant effect, being made of scarlet, yellow, and the most showy cloths and silks, and crowned on the top with crescents, pelicans, elephants, barrels, and arms and swords of gold; they were of various shapes, but mostly dome; and the valances (in some of which small looking-glasses were inserted) fantastically scalloped and fringed; from the fronts of some the proboscis and small teeth of elephants projected, and a few were roofed with leopards' skins, and crowned with various animals naturally stuffed. The State hammocks, like long cradles, were raised in the rear, the poles on the heads of the bearers; the cushions and pillows were covered with crimson taffeta, and the

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richest cloths hung over the sides. Innumerable small umbrellas, of various coloured stripes, were crowded in the intervals, whilst several large trees heightened the glare by contrasting the sober colouring of Nature.

"Discolor unde auri per ramos aura refulsit.

"The king's messengers, with gold breast-plates, made way for us, and we commenced our round, preceded by the canes and the English flag. We stopped to take the hand of every caboceer, which, as their household suites occupied several spaces in advance, delayed us long enough to distinguish some of the ornaments in the general blaze of splendour and ostentation.

"The caboceers, as did their superior captains and attendants, wore Ashanti cloths of extravagant price, from the costly foreign silks which had been unravelled to weave them in all the varieties of colour as well as pattern; they were of an incredible size and weight, and thrown over the shoulder exactly like the Roman toga: a small silk fillet generally encircled their temples, and many gold necklaces, intricately wrought, suspended Moorish charms, dearly purchased, and enclosed in small square cases of gold, silver, and curious embroidery. Some wore necklaces reaching to the waist entirely of aggry beads; a band of gold and beads encircled the knee, from which several strings of the same depended; small circlets of gold, like guineas, rings, and casts of animals, were strung round their ankles; their sandals were of green, red, and delicate white leather; manillas, and rude lumps of rock gold, hung from their left wrists, which were so heavily laden as

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to be supported on the head of one of their handsomest boys. Gold and silver pipes and canes dazzled the eye in every direction. Wolves' and rams' heads as large as life, cast in gold, were suspended from their gold-handled swords, which were held around them in great numbers; the blades were shaped like round bills, and rusted in blood; the sheaths were of leopard-skin, or the shell of a fish like shagreen. The large drums supported on the head of one man, and beaten by others, were braced around with the thigh-bones of their enemies, and ornamented with their skulls. The kettle-drums, resting on the ground, were scraped with wet fingers, and covered with leopard's skin. The wrists of the drummers were hung with bells and curiously-shaped pieces of iron, which jingled loudly as they were beating. The smaller drums were suspended from the neck by scarves of red cloth; the horns (the teeth of young elephants) were ornamented at the mouth-piece with gold and the jaw-bones of human victims. The war-caps of eagles' feathers nodded in the rear, and large fans of the wing feathers of the ostrich played around the dignitaries. Immediately behind their chairs (which were of a black wood, almost covered by inlays of ivory and gold embossment), stood their handsomest youths, with corselets of leopard's skin, covered with gold cockle-shells, and stuck full of small knives, sheathed in gold and silver, and the handles of blue agate; cartouch boxes of elephant's hide hung below, ornamented in the same manner; a large gold-handled sword was fixed behind the right shoulder, and silk scarves and horses' tails (generally white) streamed from

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the arms and waist-cloths; their long Danish muskets had rims of gold at small distances, and the stocks were ornamented with shells.

"Finely-grown girls stood behind the chairs of some, with silver basins. Their stools (of the most laborious carved work, and generally with the large bells attached to them) were conspicuously placed on the heads of favourites; and crowds of small boys were seated around, flourishing elephants' tails curiously mounted. The warriors sat on the ground close to these, and so thickly as not to admit of our passing without treading on their feet, to which they were perfectly indifferent; their caps were of the skin of the pangolin and leopard, the tails hanging down behind; their cartouch belts (composed of small gourds which hold the charges, and covered with leopard or pig's skin) were embossed with red shells, and small brass bells thickly hung to them; on their hips and shoulders was a cluster of knives; iron chains and collars dignified the most daring, who were prouder of them than of gold; their muskets had rests affixed of leopard's skin, and the locks a covering of the same; the sides of their faces were curiously painted in long white streaks, and their arms also striped, having the appearance of armour.

"The prolonged flourishes of the horns, a deafening tumult of drums, and the fuller concert of the intervals, announced that we were approaching the king; we were already passing the principal officers of his household; the chamberlain, the gold horn-blower, the captain of the messengers, the captain for royal executions, the captain of the market, the keeper of the royal burial-ground, and the master of the bands, sat

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surrounded by a retinue and splendour which bespoke the dignity and importance of their offices. The cook had a number of small services covered with leopard's skin held behind him, and a large quantity of massive silver plate was displayed before him—punch-bowls, waiters, coffee-pots, tankards, and a very large vessel with heavy handles and clawed feet, which seemed to have been made to hold incense. I observed a Portuguese inscription on one piece, and they seemed generally of that manufacture. The executioner, a man of an immense size, wore a massive gold hatchet on his breast; and the execution stool was held before him, clothed in blood, and partly covered with a caul of fat. The king's four linguists were encircled by a splendour inferior to none, and their peculiar insignia, gold canes, were elevated in all directions, tied in bundles like fasces. The keeper of the treasury added to his own magnificence by the ostentatious display of his service; the blow-pan, boxes, scales, and weights were of solid gold.

"A delay of some minutes, whilst we severally approached to receive the king's hand, afforded us a thorough view of him. His deportment first excited my attention. Native dignity in princes we are pleased to call barbarous was a curious spectacle. His manners were majestic, yet courteous; and he did not allow his surprise to beguile him for a moment of the composure of the monarch. He appeared to be about thirty-eight years of age, inclined to corpulence, and of a benevolent countenance: he wore a fillet of aggry beads round his temples, a necklace of gold cockspur shells strung by their largest ends, and over his right

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shoulder a red silk cord, suspending three saphies cased in gold; his bracelets were of the richest mixtures of beads and gold, and his fingers covered with rings; his cloth was of a dark green silk; a pointed diadem was elegantly painted in white on his forehead; also a pattern resembling an epaulette on each shoulder, and an ornament like a full-blown rose, one leaf rising above another until it covered his whole breast; his knee-bands were of aggry beads, and his ankle-strings of gold ornaments of the most delicate workmanship, small drums, stools, swords, guns, and birds, clustered together; his sandals, of a soft white leather, were embossed across the instep-band with small gold and silver cases of saphies; he was seated in a low chair, richly ornamented with gold; he wore a pair of gold castanets on his finger and thumb, which he clapped to enforce silence. The belts of the guards behind his chair were cased in gold, and covered with small jaw-bones of the same metal; the elephants' tails, waving like a small cloud before him, were spangled with gold, and large plumes of feathers were flourished amid them. His eunuch presided over these attendants, wearing only one massive piece of gold about his neck; the royal stool,* entirely cased in gold, was displayed under a splendid umbrella, with drums, sankos,† horns, and various musical instruments, cased in gold, about the

* This stool, of the ordinary shape of the country, is said to be about four hundred years old, and is so patched and mended with gold wire and gold plates, that the original woodwork is hardly visible. A new sovereign is not regarded as king until he has taken his seat on this stool

† A corruption of *sehnku*, the name of a native stringed instrument.

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thickness of cartridge paper; large circles of gold hung by scarlet cloth from the swords of State, the sheaths as well as the handles of which were also cased; hatchets of the same were intermixed with them; the breasts of the Ocrahs and various attendants were adorned with large stars, stools, crescents, and gossamer wings of solid gold.

"We pursued our course through this blazing circle, which afforded to the last a variety exceeding description and memory; so many splendid novelties diverting the fatigue, heat, and pressure we were labouring under. We were almost exhausted, however, by the time we reached the end; when, instead of being conducted to our residence, we were desired to seat ourselves under a tree at some distance, to receive the compliments of the whole in our turn.

"The swell of the bands gradually strengthened on our ears, the peals of the warlike instruments bursting upon the short but sweet responses of the flutes; the gaudy canopies seemed to dance in the distant view, and floated broadly as they were springing up and down in the foreground; flags and banners waved in the interval, and the chiefs were eminent in their crimson hammocks, amidst crowds of musketry. They dismounted as they arrived within thirty yards of us; their principal captains preceded them with the gold-handled swords, a body of soldiers followed with their arms reversed, then their bands and gold canes, pipes, and elephants' tails. The chief, with a small body-guard under his umbrella, was generally supported round the waist by the hands of his favourite slave, whilst captains holloa'd, close in his ear, his warlike

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deeds and (strong) names, which were reiterated with the voices of Stentors by those before and behind; the larger party of warriors brought up the rear. Old captains of secondary rank were carried on the shoulders of a strong slave; but a more interesting sight was presented in the minors, or young caboceers, many not more than five or six years of age, who, overweighted by ornaments, were carried in the same manner (under their canopies), encircled by all the pomp and parade of their predecessors.

"A band of Fetish men, or priests, wheeled round and round as they passed with surprising velocity. Manner was as various as ornament; some danced by with irresistible buffoonery, some with a gesture and carriage of defiance; one distinguished caboceer performed the war dance before us for some minutes, with a large spear, which grazed us at every bound he made; but the greater number passed us with order and dignity, some slipping one sandal, some both, some turning round after having taken each of us by the hand; the attendants of others knelt before them, throwing dust on their heads.

"The king's messengers who were posted near us, with their long hair hanging in twists like a thrum mop,* used little ceremony in hurrying by this transient procession, yet it was nearly eight o'clock before the king approached.

"It was a beautiful starlight night, and the torches which preceded him displayed the splendour of his regalia with a chastened lustre, and made the human

* This appears to be a mistake. It is the executioners who wear their hair twisted into numerous small tags.

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trophies of the soldiers more awfully imposing. The skulls of three Banda caboceers, who had been his most obstinate enemies, adorned the largest drum; the vessels in which the boys dipped their torches were of gold. He stopped to inquire our names a second time and to wish us good night; his address was mild and deliberate; he was followed by his aunts, sisters, and others of his family, with rows of fine gold chains around their necks. Numerous chiefs succeeded, and it was long before we were at liberty to retire. We agreed in estimating the number of warriors at 30,000."

The missionaries, Ramseyer and Kühne, received a similar reception on their arrival in Coomassie in April, 1870. It was on a rather smaller scale, they being prisoners of war, and the army absent on a campaign in Krepe, but their account is interesting as showing how little such pageants vary. They say: "Our march finished" (they had first walked in procession past the king and assembled chiefs), "we sat and received in our turn the greetings of this high and mighty assembly. All rose, the horns blew, the jubilant cry resounded louder than the drum, as the grandees approached us with measured steps. The inferiors preceded,* then the great men, shaded by their umbrellas, and surrounded by their pages, saluted us as they passed by, each raising the hand. In front of the principal chiefs marched boys adorned with elephants' or horses' tails, and carrying drums made of the trunks of trees, and horns adorned by human jaws. A few of them had elephants' tusks hollowed

* This is the invariable custom.

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out, and emitting a sound surpassing all others in strength and clearness, each musician trying to honour us by producing their loudest and shrillest tones as they passed us. The chiefs were arrayed in silk, or the brilliantly-embroidered cloth of the country; every individual wore his handsomest jewels, especially his massive gold plate on his breast, his carved seat being carried on the head of an attendant, who was followed by soldiers bearing his arms.

"After a number of such personages had passed, the great monarch himself approached. He was heralded by some eighty individuals, each wearing a cap of monkey's skin adorned by a golden plate, and each holding his seat in his hand. Then came the dwarfs and buffoons in red flannel shirts, with the officials of the harem; there were also sixty boys, every one of whom wore a charm sewn up in leopard's skin, with written scraps from the Koran, which were highly valued; this train was followed by five tastefully-carved royal chairs, hung round with gold and silver bells, but all black, being stained with the blood of human sacrifices.

"Next, under an enormous silk sunshade, appeared the actual throne chair, encased with gold, and with long golden pipes carried behind it, as well as various wonderful vessels and articles of vertu. A peculiar music was heard rising above the sound of the horns and the beating of the drums. This was produced by some thirty wild-looking boys, each of whom swung, as he marched, a calabash half-filled with stones. This din was anything but agreeable to a European ear, though the performers kept marvellously good time.

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"Still larger fans and umbrellas now approached, preceded by a corps of a hundred executioners dancing, whose ages varied from boys of only ten years to gray-headed old men; all wore leopard-skin caps, and had two knives slung from their necks. The dismal death-drum, whose three beats were heard from time to time, closed the procession.

"Now the music became wilder and louder, the ivory horns sounded shriller, the screaming and howling surpassed all description. Led by an attendant under a magnificent sunshade of black velvet, edged with gold, and kept in constant motion, the royal potentate appeared. Boys with sabres, fans, and elephants' tails danced around him like imps of darkness, screaming with all the power of their lungs, 'He is coming, he is coming. His majesty the lord of all the earth approaches.' The boys then retired that the king might be able to look well at us and enjoy the intensity of his happiness. Golden sandals adorned his feet, a richly-ornamented turban was on his head, his dress was of yellow silk damask, his hands and feet glittered with gold bracelets and bangles. Half-a-dozen pages held him by the arms, back, and legs, like a little child, crying continually, 'Look before thee, O lion! take care, the ground is not even here.'

"At this juncture we were told to stand up and thank the 'nana' or queen-mother, the most influential person at Court, for the presents she had lately sent us; she was protected from the sun by large fans, embroidered with coloured silk, held round her by Court ladies, and wore a gorgeous dress, with a silk scarf thrown over her shoulders. She was a stout, energetic

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old lady, and returned our greeting with a good-natured smile. The procession, after lasting an hour and a half, ended with a number of officers and others; and we departed more light-hearted than we had arrived."

Yam Custom.

Perhaps the most important state ceremony held by the Ashantis, is the political part of the Yam Custom, when all the chiefs of the various provinces of Ashanti, with a military contingent from each, and the chiefs of the tributary states, are compelled, unless a special exemption be granted, to be present in Coomassie. The ceremony therefore affords the king an opportunity of reviewing the military forces of the kingdom, while the presence of the chiefs is a guarantee of their loyalty, and serves also to strengthen the ties between them all. During the Yam Custom, moreover, all matters of importance are discussed by the king and council, who thus have an opportunity of examining the chiefs in person, concerning the affairs of their provinces. At this time, too, appeals against the judgments of the provincial chiefs are heard and disposed of.

In former times the September festival appears to have been the usual time for the chiefs to be summoned to the capital, but of late years they have repaired there during the December festival. In preparation of this ceremony all the public seats in the town, called *adampan*, and which are rooms open at one side, are whitened as a sign of rejoicing. The royal *adampan*, besides being whitened, are thoroughly repaired; but

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those of the public, however dilapidated their condition may be, are ordinarily only whitened. Before opening the festival the king usually proceeds through the town to assure himself that this has been properly carried out. The *adampan* are generally raised four or five feet above the level of the ground, and ornamented with rude frescoes, done in white earth upon a background of reddish earth.

Upon arriving in Coomassie, each chief is honoured with the usual public reception accorded to a distinguished visitor, the pomp of each reception being proportioned to the rank and importance of the chief; and presents are then exchanged between the king and his visitors, it being a point of honour that those given by the former should exceed in value those received by him.

All the chiefs having assembled at the capital, the ceremony commences by the king leaving his palace, with the members of the royal family, his chiefs, and the officers of his household, all of whom are accompanied by trains of attendants, and proceeding in state to a large open space to the west of the palace, where are kept three small pieces of cannon, which were sent by the Dutch to assist Bosianti, king of Denkera, when that kingdom was invaded by the Ashantis in 1701, and had there been captured. On account of these cannon being kept there, the open space is called *Apprŭm m'*, "The Place of Cannon." Upon a rectangular mound of earth at this spot the king takes his seat; while his following seat themselves immediately to the right and left, in order of rank, and the masses of the populace fill in the background. Every one having taken his

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allotted place, jars of palm-wine, supplied by the king, are distributed throughout the assembly; and messengers are sent to the provincial chiefs to inform them that the king is ready to receive them.

They, being in readiness and awaiting this signal, at once move off in procession, the lowest in rank leading, and pass in review before the king. The inferior chiefs and captains, on approaching the mound upon which the king is seated, bow, and wave the right hand in salutation, and in token of submission; but the chiefs of provinces and tributary states ascend the mound, and, standing before the king, renew their oath of allegiance on a sword of state that is handed to them by one of the royal sword-bearers. The oath is taken with the point of the sword held to the breast, and the handle extended towards the king. The chief, after taking the oath, seizes the sword by the handle, waves it over his head, and in loud tones proclaims his fidelity to the throne, and boasts of the services and deeds of prowess he has performed. If he be high in favour, it is customary for the king to direct that he be saluted by the assembly, and the congregated thousands rend the air with their acclamations. Each chief in turn thus renews his oath, until all have passed before the king.

The rank of the various chiefs is indicated by their insignia, which are governed by sumptuary laws. The three chief men of the kingdom, namely, the chief, or king, of Djuabin, and the chiefs of Mampon and Bekwae, have sandals ornamented with gold and silver, similar to those of the king. Their umbrellas are of silk, surmounted by golden emblems, and each has in his

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train a band of horns made of the tusks of elephants. Chiefs of the second class are recognisable by their carved arm-chairs, profusely studded with brass nails. Their umbrellas are also of silk, but surmounted by wooden emblems; and they are preceded by boys carrying elephants' tails. Chiefs of the third class have the same insignia as those of the second, with the exception that their umbrellas are of cotton. Chiefs of the fourth rank also have cotton umbrellas, but are distinguished from those of the third by chairs of inferior workmanship and ornamentation; and by horses' tails being borne before them instead of those of elephants. Chiefs of the first and second classes are always preceded by a number of drummers.

The remainder of the festival is passed in rejoicings. The chiefs and warriors parade the streets decked in their proudest array; and the king's wives, covered with gold ornaments, and their bodies smeared with a yellow powder, walk in procession. The *odumfo*, coloured red, dance through the streets, with long chains of jawbones round the neck, and drink blood out of calabashes. Spirits of all kinds are lavishly distributed amongst the populace, brass basins containing brandy or rum are placed at almost every street-corner, and universal intoxication prevails. For three days all laws are abrogated, and the greatest licentiousness is permitted. The streets are crowded with drunken persons staggering to and fro, and encumbered with the bodies of those who have succumbed to the strength of their potations.

On the great day of the festival human sacrifices are offered, and any person found lingering near the

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palace may be seized and slain by the *odumfo*. No language can describe the brutal and ferocious appearance of these executioners. Their hair, which, through never being combed or dressed, is always of a rusty black colour, is twisted into numerous small tags, presenting the appearance of a mop; and as they dance with frantic gestures, the shock of hair springs up and down. After slaughtering a victim they cut up and divide the body, and each *odumfo* dances with the portion of the corpse that has fallen to his share. He to whom the head has been assigned paints its forehead white and red, addresses it with mocking or endearing epithets, and finally hangs it to a cord around his neck. The heart of a victim is usually cut up into a number of small pieces, which the executioners display to the crowd, either on the tips of their knives or held between the teeth. The horrible shouts and cries in which they indulge while thus dancing, are supposed to terrify and drive away any loitering and evilly-disposed *insisa*.

In the evening of this day the skulls of all the most formidable foes of Ashanti are brought from Bantama; and each with a red rag bound round the forehead to represent a bloody bandage, is borne by a man who leaps, dances, and shouts through the streets. Amongst the skulls thus paraded is that of the unfortunate Sir Charles Macarthy, who fell in the Battle of Assamacow in 1824, and which is displayed in a brass basin. These trophies of former victories having been sufficiently displayed, are then placed in turn before the tutelary deity of the market-place, of whom a priest then inquires the condition and state of their *asrah-*

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manfo. On this night it is usual for the chiefs to again swear fidelity, eating with the king from a brass basin containing a mess prepared by the priests, and of which most, if not all, of the ingredients are from the places of abode of various gods. The reason of this, which is called by Europeans "eating fetish," has been already described.

Audiences.

At royal audiences in Coomassie the king takes his seat, with the queen-mother and the principal chiefs of the capital, upon a raised platform in one of the courts of the palace. His chair is elaborately carved, and ornamented with gold, and his state umbrella is held open over his head. In the court, to the right of the platform, stand the linguists, with the chiefs of the second class; and to the left are the chiefs and captains of the royal household. Behind the king stand some of his sword-bearers and immediate personal attendants, and on each side of him is placed a state sword. One of these is called the war sword, and the king makes a declaration of war by taking it in his hand. In front of the platform is a crowd of Court-criers, executioners, and other officials, so arranged as to leave a narrow passage through their midst, by which the platform may be approached.

Directly the person to whom the audience has been granted enters the court with his train of attendants, the executioners shout out the titles and "strong names" of the king. In the midst of this din the visitor salutes the king, and as soon as quiet is restored, proceeds to business. According to Court etiquette

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the speaker may not directly address the king. His address must be made to the linguists, who then repeat it to the king, clothed in the language prescribed by custom. The king's replies are similarly conveyed through these officials.

A person who has been granted an audience may not leave the royal presence until he has received permission to do so. It is considered a great breach of etiquette to solicit permission to retire, the signal for withdrawal being given by the king, who either rises, or signifies that the audience is at an end.

Return of an Army to the Capital.

Amongst the Ashantis the return of an army from a campaign is always celebrated by a State Ceremony, and there are a variety of rules of procedure to be observed in such cases. An army, once having set forth on a campaign, may not return to the capital until permission to do so has been granted by the king; and for this the general in command applies directly he considers that he has effected the purpose for which he was despatched, or if, through reverses, he finds that there is no prospect of success. In the latter case, permission is sometimes withheld for a time.

When leave to return has been granted, the general in command sends to the capital the jawbones of the slain enemies; which are, after a battle, carefully collected from the dead, and then preserved by being dried and smoked. If the army has been worsted in the campaign, and no trophies from the foe are

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forthcoming, the jawbones of all those who have been put to death in propitiation of the gods are similarly collected and preserved; for the army may not return home without a trophy. The jawbones, packed in loads, are transported to the capital by prisoners of war; the heads of any hostile chiefs who may have fallen being preserved entire and carried separately. With these trophies of victory are also sent the bulk of the prisoners of war, secured in the manner already described, and guarded by an escort of soldiers. Those amongst the prisoners who are destined for sacrifice at the termination of the ceremony, are distinguished by being painted on the throat and breast with red and white earth.

On the day that these reach the capital a general rejoicing is held; to be followed, in the course of two or three days, by a day of mourning for the slain of the nation, whose names are called aloud by persons sent from the army for that purpose. Those families, of which members have fallen, appear covered with red earth, the sign of mourning, and even household utensils are streaked with the same colour; while the sounds of lamentation, mingled with the beating of drums and the blowing of horns, fill the air. The mourners, painted red from head to foot, dance in the streets and market-place till nightfall, when the death-drum sounds, and those prisoners who were destined for sacrifice, are slaughtered to the *manes* of the fallen chiefs. The return of the army itself may not take place until forty days after the trophies of victory have been received in the capital. This period having elapsed it enters the town, and bearing the

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remains of its fallen chiefs, passes in review before the king. A few days later, a report of the campaign is made by the general, when presents and honours are distributed.

During their detention in Coomassie, Messrs. Ramseyer and Kühne were so fortunate as to be able to witness two such ceremonial receptions; one, on the return of the army under Adu Boffo from Krepe, and the second, on the return of that under Amankwa Tia in December, 1873, after its reverses in the British Protectorate. These two accounts are interesting as illustrating the scene after victory and after defeat.

"On Monday, the 4th" (September, 1871), "Crawford, M. Bonnat, and Kühne, went early to the market-place, where the army defiled from seven in the morning until night, during which time, chests containing the bones of the fallen chiefs, each surrounded by the wives of the deceased, were continually carried past. The chief who falls in battle is lightly buried, and water is poured on his grave many times a day, for some weeks. The bones thus becoming clean, are taken out and deposited in a chest, which, on this occasion, was covered with rich damask silk. The women, besmeared with red, shrieked and howled fearfully. The chiefs who return alive are likewise surrounded with women, who, decked in green foliage, dance around their husbands amid songs of joy.

"The number of common soldiers who fall is denoted by small sticks fastened to a pole, and carried by one of the company. On this occasion, however, this was omitted, as they did not wish their heavy losses to be made prominent.

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"Our old friend the general wore a small round cap, ornamented by buffalo's horns and falcon's feathers, and was attended by his lieutenant, Nantshi. Before Adu Boffo was borne the stolen bell from Ho, which for years called the people to service, and was now rung again as the brightest trophy of the campaign.

"I went out for a few moments in the evening to get an idea of the review. It was really an imposing sight. The whole market-place as far as Bantama was crowded with people, and between them defiled the soldiers as far as the 'coom' tree, which gives its name to the town; * under it the clusters of large umbrellas betokened the presence of the most important personages. As each company appeared before the king, they fired a salute, then turning round, marched back again in a second line to the place from whence they came. The hair of the majority was rough and shaggy, giving their heads the look of Medusas. Their costumes were by no means uniform; some wore blouses English fashion, others donned various pieces of European clothing, but they were mostly in native dress, rolled together under their cartridge-pouches. The chiefs appeared in dirty red and yellow coats, ornamented with amulets, and many had caps of antelope skin decorated with feathers, gold plates, and charms. The lookers-on were mostly streaked with white or red paint; the red were the mourners, not a few of whom stood aside, crying and shrieking.

"On September 7th, the report of the campaign was

* Coom, or more properly, *Kum*, and *assi*, "under." Thus Kumassi—literally, "Under the Kum-tree."

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given to the king, and Adu Boffo was then honoured with many presents, and a visit from his majesty, who, accompanied by his chiefs, went to the end of the market-place, where the army was drawn up. Kühne and M. Bonnat joined him there, and offered their hand to Adu Boffo and his officers. The first presents were twenty peredwanes of gold-dust (£162), three gold bracelets, two large umbrellas, twenty sheep, twenty loads of salt, twenty kegs of brandy, with several other things."

The return of the army in 1873 presented no such scene of triumph. Previous to its return, only twenty loads of jawbones had been received, with some eighty prisoners, and volunteers who had joined the Ashantis. This was a poor result for the great efforts which had been made, and the immense losses sustained; and when the names of the slain were called over, the whole of Coomassie was plunged into mourning. Ramseyer says:—"Suddenly a cry of distress arose which rolled like a wave through the whole town, and people ran into the street painted red, crying and howling till I was cut to the heart. The sacrifices were then freed from their chains, and after being pierced through the cheek, beheaded amidst the beating of drums. . . . Dumb and depressed the king returned home; and the queen-mother is said to have mourned in the street with her Court ladies, her hands folded over her head; for the loss is dreadful. Bekwae, a small country, is said to miss a thousand of its men. Officers who went with twenty, returned alone with their baggage on their heads!

"On Monday, December 22nd, the army re-entered the capital. Whole rows of boxes were carried past

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wrapped in precious materials, followed by their (supposed) mourning wives, and their attendants painted red. Two hundred and seventy-nine persons had perished by sacrifice, and more would follow. Very few could be seen in the crowd who were painted white, the majority of the people were wailing in the red ornaments of mourning.

"Though living at some distance from the market-place, we were driven almost frantic by the incessant beating of drums, accompanied by screams and occasional firing. From eight in the morning till seven in the evening the army passed in file; and the streets which opened on the market-place were so crowded with soldiers, that nothing could be seen but a black mass swaying to and fro, whilst over it the many-coloured umbrellas waved conspicuously. We had often been told that the whole Ashantee army had gone to the war, which was no doubt true, and on that day all Ashantee appeared to be in Coomassie. M. Bonnat, who made his way unhindered through the crowds, reckoned the number of those present at about one hundred thousand.

"The losses of the campaign were undoubtedly great. Still about half the army survived, and some of the chiefs who had been reported dead returned in safety. . . . Altogether two hundred and eighty chiefs had fallen. The loss of soldiers was announced in the following way. Every chief who passed before the king threw into a vase as many grains of corn as he had lost people. It was said that sixteen battles had been fought, and the army had been attacked four times in retreat, and suffered each time terrible loss."

Instead of any distribution of presents and honours

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on this occasion, the chiefs were required to repay the king the cost of the war, and to replace the ammunition that had been expended in vain. "Of some was demanded sixty, of others forty or fifty peredwanes. They were terribly excited, and appealed to the council at the palace for a mitigation of these enormous demands with little success. Similar sums were demanded from some of the chief people, one of whom had to sell not only his slaves, but his wife, to furnish the five peredwanes; he sold his son, too, for nine dollars, and the poor boy cried bitterly. There were many upright, quiet men, who had wished for peace and free trade, who lost half their families by the war, and were afterwards obliged to sell the other half to pay for it."

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CHAPTER XIX.

SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT.

THE king, or head chief of each tribe, is the suzerain lord over all the other chiefs of the tribe, and receives tribute from, and exercises certain rights over them. His dealings are generally only with the chiefs, who, in their turn, exercise authority over the sub-chiefs and head-men of the districts under their jurisdiction. Five, six, or more villages are grouped under the jurisdiction of a town, where a chief resides; and the chiefs of all such towns in the territory of the tribe are under the direct authority of the king of the tribe. The chiefs have the able-bodied men of their towns and dependent villages organised for war purposes into what are called town companies, the captains of which are under the direct authority of the chiefs; and in time of war each chief takes the field in person with his own contingent. Each chief has his own local court, but in any matter of importance which concerns the whole tribe, the king sits in court with all his chiefs, in the open air, and in the presence of the people. Any man who may be dissatisfied with the decision of his chief has the right of appeal to the

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king, whose judgment is final. The king, besides being paramount chief of the whole tribe, and direct ruler of the chiefs of the first rank, *i.e.*, the governors of towns and districts, himself exercises the functions of a chief of the first rank as far as concerns the affairs of the capital, and the villages dependent on it.

Within the Colony all punishments are now only such as may be inflicted by English laws, and the old native procedure is at an end. Beyond the Colony it is, of course, still in force. There a person accused of a crime is "put in log" till the day of trial, when he is brought before witnesses, and tried by the king or chief in open court. A person "put in log" is secured to the trunk of a felled tree by an iron staple, which is driven in over the wrist; and the expression "put in log" is a literal translation of the Tshi phrase, *Idwia m'bor*. If the evidence be insufficient to support the charge, recourse is had to the odum-wood ordeal already described. Punishments may be death, mutilation, fine, or slavery; but the first can ordinarily, except in the case of slaves, only be inflicted by the supreme head of the tribe. The ordinary method of carrying out a sentence of capital punishment is by decapitation; but in Ashanti persons of royal blood are shot or drowned, or have the neck broken by a blow from an elephant's tusk. A death sentence is often remitted, but in such cases a heavy fine is exacted, and the nose, ears, or lips of the offender cut off.

The king of the tribe is not by any means an absolute monarch possessed of unlimited power, and he is always controlled to a certain extent by the chiefs. The king alone cannot make peace or war,

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nor can he enter into any negotiations or treaties which concern the interests of the whole tribe, without the consent of the chiefs. In all such cases the chiefs of the first rank must be consulted, and it is they, with the king in council, who rule the tribe. As has already been said, the king is, as far as the affairs of the district in which he resides are concerned, himself a chief of the first rank; and a tribe may be regarded as being divided into a number of districts ruled by chiefs of the first rank, one of whom is, in addition, the king of the tribe. The government is rather that of an aristocracy than a personal despotism, and the chiefs of districts, though feudatories of the king, preserve a species of semi-independence. The populace has no voice whatever in the affairs of the tribe. Rule is maintained principally by terror, and the chief strength of the king lies in his power to take life at any time.

The kingdom of Ashanti is divided into the following districts:

(1). Coomassie, with its dependent towns and villages, under the direct rule of the king.

(2). The provinces, viz., Djuabin, Bekwae, Mampon, Kokofu, Insuta, Koransa (Kwaransah), Abessin, and Adansi. The chiefs of these provinces enjoy a semi-independence, which is most marked in the case of Djuabin, and least so in that of Kokofu. The chiefs of Djuabin, Bekwae, and Mampon, which are considered the first provinces, have the nominal power of life and death over their free subjects; but it is never exercised without reference to the king at Coomassie. All the chiefs of provinces can put to

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death at any time, and for any reason, slaves, who are not regarded as Ashantis proper. The sub-chiefs, captains, and head-men of villages, can only put their slaves to death on those occasions when it is customary to sacrifice human victims.

(3). The sub-provinces. These are Edwabin to the south-west, and Kwao to the east. They are ruled from Coomassie by officers of the royal household, who live in their districts as vice-regal Residents, and are the medium of communication between the local chiefs and the king.

All the chiefs of provinces have their own residences in Coomassie, where they reside during the yam custom, and at other periods when summoned to the capital. In their own provincial capitals, from which their districts derive their names, they live in regal state.

In Ashanti the queen-mother is the second person in the kingdom. The next most important personages are the chiefs of Djuabin, Bekwae, and Mampon, who are called chiefs of the first rank. In the second rank are the chiefs of the provinces of Kokofu, Koransa, Insuta, and Abessin ; the general of the army, and the chief of the king's household. In the third rank are the chief of the province of Adansi, the chiefs of Coomassie, the chief of the linguists, and other officials. In the fourth rank are the linguists, sub-chiefs, and captains of Coomassie.

The power of the king is curbed by a council called *Ashanti Kotoko*, literally, Ashanti Porcupine, meaning that it cannot be molested without injury. It is composed of the king, the queen-mother, the chiefs of Djuabin, Bekwae, and Mampon, the general of the

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army, and a few of the principal chiefs of Coomassie. This council possesses absolute power, and rules the entire kingdom. In important matters the provincial chiefs of the second rank are summoned to Coomassie for consultation; but this is really a nominal concession, for the council is so much feared that no individual would venture to vote counter to its known wishes.

The wealth of the king is derived from various sources. By Ashanti custom he is the primary heir to the property of all his subjects; but this right is rarely exercised except in the case of chiefs or men of rank, and then only in a modified sense. Thus, on the death of a chief, the king usually only retains the greater portion of the gold-dust left by the deceased, leaving the remainder, with the slaves, household property, gold ornaments, etc., to the secondary heir, *i.e.*, the brother or nephew of the deceased. On the death of a man holding an office in the king's household, all his property passes into the hands of the king. Another source of wealth is the tribute paid to him personally by the vassal states; and a very considerable one are the nuggets of gold found in the kingdom, all of which above a certain weight are by custom the property of the king.

From the foregoing sources the king defrays his personal expenses, and those of his court and household. The treasure inherited from his predecessor, often of large amount, is regarded as Crown property, and may be used for national purposes only. According to Ashanti custom, on the accession of a new king, the queen-mother retains possession of the gold of the defunct monarch, until the new ruler has shown

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that he is worthy of being entrusted with the Crown wealth. Frequently it thus remains in trust for four or five years. Kwoffi Kari-kari was not allowed to take possession of the wealth accumulated by Kwaku Duah till five years after his accession. In this case the delay was principally due to the large amount left, which, as it is said four strong slaves could only lift it with difficulty, probably amounted to some 800 lbs. of gold.

The military organisation is the same amongst all the Tshi-speaking tribes, the whole of the men capable of bearing arms being divided into town companies. The companies are under the direct command of the captains, whose office is hereditary, and the captains owe direct allegiance to the chief of their district. Each town, with its dependent villages, has some five or six companies, the members of which reside in distinct quarters of the town, or in special villages. Each company has its own designation. Thus, the seven companies of Cape Coast are known by the following names:

No. 1 ...	....	...	Behnsi.
„ 2 ...	...	...	Anarfu.
„ 3 ...	...	...	Intsin.
„ 4 ...	...	...	Unkum.
„ 5 ...	...	...	Brohfo n' kŏă.
„ 6 ...	...	...	Tuh-t'anim.
„ 7 ...	...	...	Amarnfo.

Most of these titles are derived from the quarter of the town in which the members of the company reside, but *Tuh-t'anim* appears to mean "foremost," and *Brohfo n' kŏă* means "white man's slaves," a title

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which was given to No. 5 Company, because it was originally composed of men who were employed in various capacities by Europeans. Every company possesses a number of drums of various sizes, usually kept at the *ehsúdu*, and those of the tribes living under British rule have company flags, a custom borrowed from Europeans.

The institution of the town companies, although admirable for military purposes when a whole tribe is called to war, is in time of peace a constant cause of disorder within the Colony. The greatest rivalry exists between companies, and the flaunting of a company flag in a quarter of a town belonging to another company, is generally the signal for a serious disturbance, in which several lives are lost. In 1877 a conflict took place between No. 1 and No. 2 companies at Cape Coast, the cause of quarrel being a question of precedence. The junior company, No. 2, had hitherto always been obliged to give precedence to No. 1, and to leave the post of honour, the rear, to it; but in that year they declined to recognise the right of the senior company to a monopoly of this position. An outbreak ensued in which fire-arms were freely used, and order was only restored by calling out the military. Six or seven men were killed, and a great number wounded. The leading rioters were tried, and four, amongst them the rival captains, sentenced to death and hanged.

Notwithstanding this severe lesson, in 1885 a conflict took place at Cape Coast in which Nos. 2, 3, and 4 companies were arrayed against No. 1. As an instance of how trivial are the causes of these disturbances,

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the quarrel arose in this case because the men of No. 1 company made a flag of a piece of blanket, and explained its significance by saying that in former times they used to feed and clothe the men of the other companies. In the same year a quarrel took place between the companies of Puttaybu and Acroful, two villages to the north-east of Cape Coast, which culminated in an outbreak in which several persons were killed and wounded. A serious disturbance also occurred in Winnebah. Beyond the Colony such outbreaks would be almost impossible, but the Colonial Government, while destroying the power of the chiefs, has left the company organisation intact; and the captains of the companies now arrogate to themselves an independence and freedom from restraint which formed no part of the original scheme.

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CHAPTER XX.

LAWS.

The Laws Relating to Marriage, and the Relations of the Sexes.

CONTRACTS of marriage are made by the payment of a certain sum to the relations of the bride, and this sum varies according to the rank of the girl, from about four-and-a-half ackies to two ounces of gold, *i.e.*, from about 18*s.* to £7 5*s.* The amount thus paid is called by Europeans "head-money," or "head-rum," which terms are literal translations of the native ones, *Etsi siccah*, and *Etsi r'ensa.*

Amongst the very poor, however, the man and woman sometimes live together without any head-money having been paid, or perhaps with only one or two bottles of rum given to the family to drink. In such cases the husband generally resides with the family of his wife, and gives his services towards their common support.

Betrothals frequently take place before the girl has arrived at a marriageable age, and sometimes even before she is born. Such a betrothal is held perfectly

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binding upon the family of the girl, who is henceforward regarded as the wife of the person betrothed to her; and he narrowly watches her conduct, and frequently demands and receives compensation for the most innocent liberties, which may have been taken with her by men who were not aware that the girl was betrothed. Children are sometimes betrothed to each other, and in this case the presentation of a few bottles of rum and a piece of cotton print to the parents of the girl, destines her to be the wife of the boy.

If after the bride has been removed to the house of the husband, he finds that she has been unchaste, he can repudiate her, and can recover from her family both the head-money which he has paid, and the expenses he has incurred in the marriage ceremony. Should, however, a husband make an accusation of this nature without foundation, he is called before the principal men of the village by the father of the bride, who produces the "tokens of virginity," and the husband is then bound to pay damages for defamation, while the wife may, if she pleases, repudiate him without having to return the head-money.

Adultery can only be committed by a married woman. It is punished by a fine imposed upon the paramour, which varies in amount according to his rank, while the wife is usually beaten. When the paramour is a slave, the fine is exacted from the master, who is by Tshi law responsible for all the actions of the slave. If the man be unable to pay the sum demanded, he is sold as a slave. The wives of chiefs and men in power are frequently instigated by their husbands to intrigue with other men, in order that they may profit

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by the fine or slavery which would be the result of the palaver. Dupuis says,* that when the slave trade flourished on the Gold Coast it was a common mode of entrapping youths, who, being unable to pay the fine, were sold in the public markets for exportation to the West Indies. In Ashanti a chief has by custom the right to put to death an adulterous wife; but this right is seldom exercised, except in extreme cases, or where the paramour is a slave in the house; and it is usual for the husband to allow her family to pay a sum for her redemption. In an extreme case, if the wife belong to a family too powerful to admit of the husband putting her to death, he usually cuts off her nose as a punishment.

Should an adulterous wife prefer to live with her paramour, the latter can, if the husband consent, obtain her as his wife, on payment to the husband of the head-money which he paid for her, and all the expenses that have been incurred upon her account both before and after marriage. In this case he pays no fine. Under such an arrangement the wife is liable to the new husband for the sum she has cost him; and she cannot separate from him without making restitution. Should she die, her family become responsible for this debt, which they must pay, or else substitute another wife, upon whom the debt then devolves. Should the husband die, the debt becomes due to his heir, whom, if the wife cannot pay, she must marry. In the latter alternative a brother thus frequently becomes the husband of a brother's wife, or a nephew of an uncle's. An interval, however, is always allowed to elapse before

* "Journal of a Residence in Ashanti," 1824.

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this second marriage is consummated, and sometimes it is not consummated at all. But the woman is nevertheless regarded as a wife, and damages would be exacted from any one with whom she might commit adultery.

Separations are of frequent occurrence, and are governed by the following laws. If a husband grossly maltreats a wife, or neglects her for a considerable time in favour of a rival, she may leave him without making restitution of the head-money. A woman who is ill-treated by her husband has the right to return to her family, upon their repaying the husband the head-money. If a wife wishes to leave the husband without due cause, or simply because she is tired of the connection, she can do so with his permission, on repaying him the head-money and all the expenses and presents he may have made. Should she have borne him children, she takes them with her; but she must pay him four-and-a-half ackies for each child, which sum is regarded as an equivalent for maintenance. Sometimes this is compromised by the mother leaving the male children with the father; but in this case he has no pecuniary claim upon them, and cannot sell or pawn them. If the wife is unable to make restitution of the expenses incurred by the husband on her account, she may leave her children in pawn to him for the amount, and they are obliged to serve their father until the entire sum, with fifty per cent. of interest, is paid. From such causes children often become pawns in their father's house for life, and are inherited as such by his heir.

In parts of Ahanta if a woman has borne ten

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children she is obliged to separate from her husband for a whole year, after which she resumes cohabitation with him. This may perhaps be a survival of communal marriage, under which system no man could appropriate a woman entirely to himself, and where every woman belonged to all the men of the tribe. The esteem in which prostitutes are held amongst the western tribes of the Gold Coast may have the same origin.

A woman who has not heard of her husband for three years may marry again; and the right of the second husband to her remains valid, even should the first return. But any children born of this second union may be pawned by the first husband, subject to the laws of pawning, just as if they were his own.

No parents can force a daughter to marry a man; but if she should refuse an eligible suitor, she can no longer claim protection and support from them, and is ordinarily compelled to quit their household.

In Ashanti, a man and woman discovered in the fact in the bush, or in the open air, are by custom the slaves of the person who so discovers them, but are redeemable by their families.

Amongst the Tshi-speaking tribes, as amongst most uncivilised peoples, love, as understood by the people of Europe, has no existence. There is here no romantic sentiment, and the relation between the sexes is ordinarily quite passionless. This is no doubt partly due to polygamy and the enslaved condition of women; but is, I believe, principally due to that early gratification of the sexual passion which prevails amongst all uncivilised peoples.

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Modesty is a term which is untranslatable into Tshi, and the notion would be regarded as ridiculous. This is as might be expected, for modesty is manifestly a quality which is the result of ages of cultivation. This is sufficiently shown by the fact that under different civilisations ideas vary considerably as to what constitutes outrages of modesty. For instance, a Mohammedan woman might expose every part of her body without being considered immodest, so long as her face was covered.

Chastity *per se* is not understood. An unmarried girl is expected to be chaste because virginity possesses a marketable value, and were she to be unchaste her parents would receive little and perhaps no head-money for her. It is therefore a duty she owes to them to remain continent. A man who seduces a virgin is compelled to marry her, or, if her parents will not consent to the marriage, to pay the amount of the head-money. In the latter case, her marketable value having been received, any excesses she may commit are regarded as of no importance. A married woman is the property of her husband, and consequently may not bestow her favours without his permission. But a married man can and does lend his wife, and the wife submits to be lent, without either of them supposing that they are committing an offence against morality. Many husbands, moreover, encourage frailty on the part of their wives, hoping to profit by the sums which they will be able to exact from their paramours. Throughout, the woman is regarded as property. The daughter is the property of the mother,

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and the wife, in a more limited sense, that of the husband.

In Ashanti the women of royal blood are permitted to intrigue with any eminently fine and handsome man in order that their kings may be of commanding presence. If, however, permission has not first been obtained, the lover, and all who have assisted him in his suit, are put to death. Ramseyer and Kühne mention that in December, 1871, a brother of Prince Ansa was detected in an intrigue with two women of royal blood, and was sentenced to death by the *Ashanti Kotoko.* The king strove to mitigate the sentence to one of banishment, but the council demurred, because the offence was of an unusual character, and the prince and his accomplices were slain.

With the king's permission his sisters can contract marriage with any man who is pre-eminently handsome, no matter how low his rank and position may be. But a man of low rank who may have thus married one of the king's sisters is expected to commit suicide when his wife dies, or upon the death of an only male child. Should he outrage native custom and neglect to do so, a hint is conveyed to him that he will be put to death, which usually produces the desired effect. In Ashanti, intrigue with the female slaves of the royal household is punished by emasculation.

It is commonly supposed that where polygamy prevails conjugal fidelity is, as a consequence, very lax; but it appears that the infidelity which prevails amongst polygamic people is due to the low state of civilisation of such peoples; to the degraded condition

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of women, who are regarded as property, and frequently as mere beasts of burden; to the absence of domestic affection; and to the general want of abstract ideas of morality rather than to polygamy, which does not, of itself, seem to favour immorality. That polygamy is injurious to domestic peace is also, I think, an error, as far as uncivilised peoples are concerned. It certainly has not that effect on the Gold Coast. No jealousy prevails amongst the women, because their affection, if they have any, for their lord and master, is quite passionless, and borders on indifference. Indeed, among the wealthier classes a slave girl is generally given to a newly-married woman by her family, to wait upon her in her new home. This slave girl is almost invariably given by the wife to her husband as a concubine; and, as amongst the Jews, the children born of this intercourse are, when the wife has none, regarded as her own. Wives continually urge their husbands to take other wives, or to purchase slave-girls as concubines; for in both cases the wife finds that her labour is lightened and her authority increased, while she does not suffer even a sentimental grievance. In fact, the women prefer polygamy to monogamy.

Kissing, which appears to Europeans the natural mode of expressing affection, is unknown to the natives of the Gold Coast, as to most Negro races, except to those who have heard of the practice from Europeans. But these do not themselves practise it, and do not like it. Winwood Reade tells an amusing tale of a Mpongwe girl whom he tried to kiss, and who screamed with terror and ran away, thinking he was going to bite

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her. Lovers never kiss one another, nor do mothers kiss their babes, for the practice is to them quite unmeaning. The people of the sea-coast towns have invented a verb to describe the process, viz., *few ahnu*, which means literally "to suck mouth."

The Laws Relating to Slavery and the Custom of Pawning.

Slaves are of various kinds, native-born, imported, and prisoners of war. A distinction is always made between the first and the two latter, who are treated with far less consideration.

Native-born slaves are the children of slaves, or are persons who have voluntarily enslaved themselves in return for a certain sum, or who have been sold by their parents. The imported slaves are from the interior to the north of Ashanti, and are generally known by the name of Odonko. Vast numbers are imported annually into Gaman and Ashanti by the Moham medans of Salagha and the interior. They are, as a rule, of exceedingly low intellectual capacity, and are so inferior to the Tshi-speaking tribes, that amongst the latter it is considered very disgraceful for a daughter to have intercourse with an Odonko. The Odonkos are obstinate and brutal, and their stupidity is so proverbial that amongst the Tshis the word Odonko has come to mean "a fool." They, both male and female, are distinguished by the long scars which extend down each side of the face, in a curve from the temples to the corners of the mouth, five, or sometimes six such marks appearing on each cheek. These

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are the true tribal marks, but many Odonkos have, in addition, a square or circular raised lump or mark upon the forehead. In Ashanti the Odonko slaves number about one-eighth of the population, and are obtained partly by purchase and partly by capture. They are reserved especially for carrying loads, for no free-born Ashanti will condescend to carry a burden, and for sacrifice at funeral ceremonies. It is said that many female Odonko slaves are kept exclusively for the purpose of bearing children for sacrifice.

With the exception of the unpleasant liability of being sent at any moment to serve his master in the next world, the lot of a slave is not generally one of hardship, and is on the whole far better than that of the agricultural labourer in England. In a country where a prolific nature renders a cultivation of the soil on a large scale unnecessary, all slaves are domestic slaves. As a general rule, the slave is considered a member of the family, and, if he be native-born, succeeds in some cases, in default of an heir, to the property. He intermarries with his master's children, eats with him from the same dish, and shares in all his amusements. Slaves of all kinds are allowed to acquire property of their own, which they can use as they please, so long as they continue to serve their masters. It not unfrequently happens that the slave acquires slaves of his own, and sometimes he attains wealth and a position superior to that of his master. To illustrate the position a slave can attain — the missionaries Ramseyer and Kühne, captured by the Ashantis under Adu Boffo in Krepe, in 1869, were conveyed to Coomassie in charge of a man named Ageana, a slave

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to the general. This was a most important charge, the white captives being a great prize; but Ageana, though a slave, owned numerous slaves himself, and a large number of wives, and was a man of wealth and position, having under his orders a party of free soldiers.

The slave addresses his master as "my father," and is himself addressed as "my son;" and their mutual relations are very well expressed by these terms; every child being saleable either by the mother or father, according to the nature of the union existing between those parents, and the consequent status of the former.

The slave is utterly irresponsible, except to his master, whom he must obey implicitly; and all acts committed by a slave, at his master's bidding, are considered the acts of the master. The master is responsible for the debts of the slave, and has to make compensation for every injury he may have inflicted, or loss he may have occasioned to others, no matter whether it were done purposely or accidentally. A vicious slave can thus put his master to considerable expense, and cause him great annoyance; but on the other hand the master has full power over him, and can inflict any punishment he chooses, short of death, which, except at funeral ceremonies, can only be inflicted by a master of the rank of the chief of a district. A frequent punishment for a vicious slave is mutilation, the nose, ears, or lips being cut off. There is, however, a tradition that in former times a slave could claim his freedom on the ground of mutilation, or the loss even of a tooth, if such were the result of an act of the master.

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Cruickshank, whose eighteen years' residence on the Gold Coast entitles his opinion to respect, says of slavery amongst the Tshi-speaking tribes:* "We see in the whole of their domestic economy a complete transcript of the patriarchal age; the same participation in the cares, and sorrows, and enjoyments of life; the same community of feeling and interest; and the same external equality, combined with a devoted obedience, so marked and decided, as to assume the form of a natural instinct. This quality in the mind of dependents has a tendency to destroy the idea of personal accountability. The will of the master is in most instances more than a counterpoise for the volition of the slave, who yields obedience to his commands with an instinctive submission, without the intervention of any external compulsion, and often under circumstances where the natural inclination of the slave is opposed to the particular conduct required of him. Slavery of body and mind is thus thoroughly engrained in the constitution of the African. We have known cases of murder having been committed at the command of a master, and against the remonstrances of the slave, who, however, does not refuse compliance; and we have seen how completely the will of the master has been considered the test of the slave's conscience, by the perfect unconcern of the latter respecting the deed, and the absence of any idea of his accountability for it.

"Scarcely would the slave of an Ashanti chief obey the mandate of his king, without the special concurrence of his immediate master; and the slave of a slave will refuse obedience to his master's master, unless the

* "Eighteen Years on the Gold Coast," vol. ii., p. 241.

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order be conveyed to him through his own master. This perfect identification of the mind of the slave with that of his master, has no doubt given rise to the master's accountability for the acts of his slave, and to the laws which affect them."

Slavery, as it exists on the Gold Coast, has frequently been considered an emanation of parental authority, but I think it may more properly be considered as arising from the rights of capture, and is moreover closely connected with that form of marriage which M'Lennan has termed exogamy. M'Lennan* holds that the first stage was communal marriage, under which system all the women belonged to all the men of the tribe, and no man could monopolise a woman without infringing the rights of the whole tribe. The next stage is exogamy, under which marriage within the tribe was forbidden, and women had to be carried off from other tribes. He attributes this practice largely to infanticide. While entirely agreeing with him in his views concerning the first stage, I do not think marriage by capture prevailed to the extent he supposes, nor do I think the reasons he has given satisfactory. A man who captured a woman belonging to another tribe, would have the right to monopolise her to himself; and it would be such an obvious advantage in a society in which communal marriage prevailed, for a man to have a woman to himself, that this alone seems sufficient to account for exogamy. No doubt many men would thus capture wives; but I do not imagine that for several generations entire tribes sought their wives outside their own tribe. If

* "Primitive Marriage."

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this were so, racial differences would have become obliterated, and we should find nothing but communities of mongrels. Besides, it would be unnecessary. In primitive communities, children are regarded as belonging to the mother, and not to the father. The children, then, of a woman who had been captured from another tribe, would be regarded as belonging to her. But she would be the property of her captor, his slave, consequently her children would also be his slaves, and he would be at liberty to sell them to the men of his tribe, who could marry and monopolise the females without infringing the rights of the rest of the tribe. Thus in one or two generations there would be no necessity for capturing the women of other tribes; there would be an ample supply of women who could be monopolised within the tribe itself, owing to the custom of regarding children as belonging to the mother and not to the father, a custom which would naturally arise under the system of communal marriage. Thus originated, I think, the right of parents to sell their children, it being an emanation of the rights of capture, every man naturally having the right to dispose of any captive taken by him.

A pawn is a person placed in temporary bondage to another by the head of the family, or, in the case of a pawned slave, by the owner, either to pay a debt, or to obtain a loan. The head of a family has the right, with certain exceptions, to pawn any of his relations.

When a person is pawned on account of a debt, the services of the pawn, even should they extend over a

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considerable number of years, count for nothing towards the liquidation of the debt; and a pawn has to serve his master until the amount of the original debt, with fifty per cent. interest, is paid by the person who pawned him. Under this system many persons are condemned to a life-long bondage, and the debt is not cancelled by the death of the pawn; the debtor must either pay the debt or substitute another pawn in place of the deceased. When, however, payment is made on the death of a pawn, it is customary for the creditor to forego the interest.

The master of a pawn, unlike the master of a slave, is not responsible for his pawn's debts, nor for the consequences of his actions, for all of which the person who pawned him is held liable.

A father cannot sell or pawn a child without the consent both of the mother and her relations, unless the mother be his slave. A mother likewise cannot sell or pawn a child without the consent of the father, unless the latter refuses, or is unable to give her, the sum she requires.

When a woman is pawned, her master has the right to make her his concubine, and her children, born of this union, must serve him also. If the woman bears children to her master, she cannot be redeemed from bondage without paying the sum of four-and-a-half ackies for each child thus born. This is an equivalent for maintenance, and is in addition to the original debt and the fifty per cent. interest.

Slavery within the British Possessions on the Gold Coast was abolished by Statutes 3 and 4 Wm. IV., c. 73; but these possessions consisted of but little more

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than the ground upon which the forts were actually built, and slavery within the Protectorate was not affected. The slaves in the limited area which was British, on being declared free, asked the Colonial authorities to provide for their subsistence. On this being declared impossible, they said they would rather continue serving their masters who supplied their daily wants.

Domestic slavery in the Protectorate came under the jurisdiction of the Judicial Assessor, who was able to mitigate the harsher usages of slavery which came under notice; but the publicity given to the fact of the existence of slavery by the influx of Europeans during the Ashanti war of 1873-4, led to the Government passing, in August, 1874, an ordinance by which slaves were declared free, and the introduction of slaves into the Protectorate, and the buying, selling, or pawning of slaves and other persons was prohibited under severe penalties.

This ordinance was not productive of unmixed good, for only the vicious slaves availed themselves of their freedom. Indeed, Sir James Marshall, late Chief Justice of the Gold Coast Colony, says upon this point: "Well would it have been if it" (domestic slavery) "had remained so" (under the jurisdiction of the Judicial Assessor) "instead of suddenly being made illegal, and abolished by ordinance on a certain day. Only idle rogues and thieves took advantage of the change, and added seriously to the criminal population." This ordinance might have been a severe blow to the native chiefs whose property largely consisted of slaves, and who were thus liable to be deprived of them without

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compensation. But, as a matter of fact, they suffered no injury, as hardly any slaves claimed their freedom; and the ordinance is certainly a step in the right direction, since it enables any slave or pawn who may be dissatisfied with his condition, to escape from it.

The Laws of Succession, Property, and Land.

The custom, so prevalent among the lower races, of tracing descent through the mother and not through the father, also prevails amongst the Tshi-speaking tribes. Various plausible explanations of this have been given both by Europeans and by anglicised natives; amongst others, that the descent can always be proved from the mother, while it is often impossible to know the paternity of a child; and, in the case of succession to a tribal stool, it is a precaution which ensures the royal blood in the succession. But such explanations as this, while showing how lightly the virtue of women is held, appear insufficient to account for the practice. The true reason appears to be that it is a survival of communal marriage, under which system a child must necessarily have been regarded as belonging to the mother instead of to the father. Hence it would follow that the child comes to be considered as related to the mother and not to the father; and a man's heir, in default of a brother, comes to be his sister's son instead of his own. Polygamy would tend to perpetuate this custom, for wherever polygamy prevails, wherever each man has several wives, the tie between father and child must be much slighter than between mother and child.

The laws relating to the disposition of the children

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when husband and wife separate, show that the view held by the people of the Gold Coast is, that the children belong to the mother, and that the father has but little claim to them. The laws relating to the pawning of children by their parents also show the same line of thought; and there can, I think, be but little doubt that this is the true explanation of the native mode of tracing descent. Of course where the mother is the slave of the father, that is, is the property of the father, the children also belong to him.

Among the Tshi-speaking tribes the next of kin is a man's brother, born of the same mother; and in default of such, his eldest sister's eldest male child. Should these fail, the nephew next in order of descent is the heir, and in default of nephews the son inherits. Should there be no son, the principal native-born slave of the family succeeds to the property. In Fanti there is a variation of this general rule, the slave succeeding to the exclusion of the son, who only inherits the property of his mother.

The property of the wife is always independent of, and distinct from, that of the husband; and if a woman becomes involved in a palaver, she involves her family, but not her husband.

If a man kill a slave, he must pay the value to the owner.

Accidental injuries to property are compensated for by a fine.

The land of the tribe as a whole is attached to the stool of the king, and cannot be alienated from it. In each province or district the land is attached in the first instance to the stool of the provincial chief, subject

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to the rights of the king. The land is distributed by the provincial chiefs amongst the inhabitants of the towns and villages under his jurisdiction, a separate tract being usually allotted for each community, and, under certain limitations and restrictions, land may also be assigned to strangers. A man may take up any unoccupied piece of land in the tract allotted to the community to which he belongs, free of charge, and cultivate it; but if he has access to his plot of ground through a plot belonging to another man, he must pay the latter a small sum for his right of way.

The Laws of Debt.

The death-bed declaration of a man concerning the amounts due to him by others, made in the presence of responsible witnesses, is considered presumptive proof of the debts. The procedure, in case a person thus indicated denies the debt, has already been described.

The person who defrays the expenses of the burial is responsible for the debts of the deceased. For this reason, when a stranger dies in a village, the inhabitants seldom bury him. The body is placed on a raised platform of wattles, outside the town, with any property belonging to the deceased, and is there left. If the relatives are known to the people of the village, they send to inform them of the death; but, if not, the body is allowed to decay, or be devoured by vultures.

To avoid the great liabilities incurred under this law by the surviving relatives, in the case of the death of a member of the family who has little or no property,

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but many debts, the former sometimes make a small present to the chiefs and captains of the town, and deliver the corpse to them for burial. But this course, although it forms a legal discharge from all the debts of the deceased, is seldom adopted, as it is considered highly disgraceful for any family thus to decline the responsibility attached to the burial of their dead.

Among the northern tribes a creditor may, instead of recovering what is due from his debtor, seize the property of a third party, who then has the right to recover its value from the original debtor. This third party must, however, be of the same tribe, and usually of the same township, as the debtor. The value of the property thus seized may be out of all proportion to the amount of the debt; but the creditor is not bound to make restitution of the balance, and the third party recovers from the debtor, not the amount of the debt, but the value of the property taken. This custom formerly prevailed amongst the southern tribes also, but is now confined to the northern, amongst whom it is falling into disuse, being only now resorted to in small debts.

Interest on money lent is usually at the rate of $33\frac{1}{3}$ per cent. for every forty days, and the creditor has the right to demand payment in full, at any time, and without notice. If the debtor cannot pay, the creditor may seize him, or his family, or slaves, and sell them. In Ahanta a creditor may seize any of the fellow-townsmen of a debtor, but a person so seized is always redeemable by his family.

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Criminal Laws.

Murder is punished either by the death of the murderer, or by fine. In the latter case the heirs of the person murdered fix the amount they require as compensation, and which consequently varies according to the rank of the deceased. Should a murderer not be able to pay the sum demanded, his own life becomes forfeit; and in such cases it is usual to put him to death with the greatest refinements of torture. It is only customary to exact a fine, instead of requiring the death of the murderer, when the latter is of superior rank to the person murdered.

Manslaughter is barely distinguished from murder. If the homicide be of a rank superior to the person killed, he pays a fine proportionate to the rank of the deceased. If he be of equal rank, his life is forfeit; but he is usually allowed to die by his own hands. If he be of inferior rank, he is treated as a murderer.

Deaths resulting from accidents, and accidental injuries, are compensated for by a sum of money.

If a man swear by the king's head that another must kill him, *i.e.*, invokes the king's death if the other do not kill him, the person so called upon must kill the oath-taker, or forfeit his own life; otherwise the life of the king would be believed to be imperilled. But a man who has thus been compelled to kill another is not exonerated from the consequences of his act, and must compensate the family of the man killed. This, which appears unjust, is, it seems, due to the fact that it is believed that no man would compel another to kill him, unless he had received some great injury at his hands.

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Persons who are otherwise unable to revenge themselves, frequently have recourse to this custom, being perfectly satisfied to lose their own lives, since they know their slayers will be called to account, and will suffer the annoyance and loss sustained by a palaver.

Should a person commit suicide, and before so doing attribute the act to the conduct of another person, that other person is required by native law to undergo a like fate. This practice is termed "killing oneself upon the head of another," and the person whose conduct is supposed to have driven the suicide to commit the rash act, is visited with a death of an exactly similar nature. Such suicides are rare, and the family of the suicide generally forego their right to the death of the person indicated as the cause of the calamity, receiving money damages instead. It is said that amongst some of the northern tribes, the person upon whose head the suicide has killed himself, has the right to pay twenty ounces of gold dust in full compensation.

One of the best known instances of the full penalty being exacted, is the case of Adua Amissa, a noted native beauty of Cape Coast. Of her, and her tragic end, Cruickshank says: "The fame of Adua Amissa, a native of Cape Coast, is still kept fresh in the memory of the natives by the songs which they sing in honour of her death. People are still alive who remember the great beauty which hurried her to an early grave. She became the object of a devouring passion on the part of a young man of Cape Coast. Her relations, considering that her charms authorised them to expect a better alliance, refused to admit his addresses. This rejection so preyed upon the mind of the disappointed, that his

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life became insupportable, and he determined to sacrifice himself to his passion. He resolved however, that Adua Amissa's family should dearly rue having spurned his suit, and in the spirit of an inextinguishable vengeance, he shot himself, attributing his death to his unrequited love, and invoking his family to retaliate it upon his murderess. . . . The family of the unhappy girl endeavoured to avert this fate by offering to pay a large sum in gold; but nothing but her death would satisfy the vengeance of the youth's relatives, and they appealed to the native authorities to vindicate their laws. All the mercy which could be extended to Adua Amissa, was to allow her a few days to lament with her friends her untimely end, and to have a silver bullet put into the musket with which she was compelled to deprive herself of life. She employed the few days of respite in singing with her young friends her farewell dirge, and completed the cruel sacrifice by shooting herself."

A person found guilty of having procured the death of another through a *suhman*, is put to death, and his relatives also share the same fate, or are sold as slaves.

Theft is commonly punished by a fine, and the restoration of the stolen goods, or their value; but serious thefts are sometimes punished by death. The person robbed brings his action against, and receives compensation from, the family of the thief, and it is they who deal with the latter and punish the offence.

Theft is often passed unnoticed for years, in order that the damages may be the heavier; for, according to native custom, a thief has to restore not only the

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value of the stolen property, but also the value of all produce or profit which might reasonably have been supposed to accrue from that which was stolen. Thus, in the case of a stolen ewe, the owner might let the matter lie for two or three years, and then demand compensation from the family of the thief, for the value of the ewe and such lambs as it might reasonably be supposed to have borne, and the value of the probable progeny of the latter also. In this way damages accumulate at a terrible rate.

Laws of Coomassie.

Besides the foregoing laws, which are common to all the Tshi-speaking tribes, there are in force in Coomassie a number of arbitrary and prohibitive laws, which have, it appears, been proclaimed at the caprice of successive kings. The breach of any one of them is punishable by death, but a heavy fine, or mutilation, is commonly substituted. The following are some of these laws.

1. No goat may be brought into Ashanti territory.
2. Nothing may be planted in Coomassie.
3. No one may whistle in Coomassie.
4. No palm-oil may be spilled in the streets of Coomassie.
5. No one may smoke a European pipe in the streets.
6. No such pipe may be carried with a burden.
7. No agricultural work may be done on a Thursday.
8. No egg must be suffered to break in the streets of Coomassie.
9. No vulture may be molested.
10. No horse-hide sandals may be worn in the palace.
11. No load packed in palm branches may be carried into Coomassie.
12. No one may look at the king's wives, and every one is to hide when the king's eunuchs call to announce their approach.
13. No one may use the king's oath without due cause.
14. To be convicted of cowardice is death.
15. It is death to pick up gold that has been dropped in the market-place.

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Laws 4, 8, 11, appear to be designed to keep the town clean, as perhaps also 9, though the more direct reason is that vultures are sacred to the royal family; 5, 6, and 10 are sumptuary laws. Law 12 is derived from the neighbouring Mohammedan peoples, and with this solitary exception there is no such restriction concerning women amongst the Tshis. This law is suspended during the Yam Customs, when the king's wives, whose number averages three hundred, parade the streets, decked in all their finery. The gold dust which accumulates in the market-place in consequence of Law 15, is collected for State purposes in national emergencies.

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CHAPTER XXI.

LANGUAGE.

THE Tshi language is, as already stated, spoken by the following tribes: The Ashanti, Gaman, Tshiforo or Tufel, Akim, Assin, Akwapim, Akwamu, Fanti, Wassaw, and Ahanta, and may be conveniently divided into two dialects, viz., that of the northern tribes and that of the southern. The former is termed Akan, and the latter Fanti. The word "Tshi" is used by the northern tribes and by the neighbouring peoples of other stocks of the Gold and Slave Coasts, but appears to be unknown to the southern tribes.

Each tribe, both of the northern and southern dialectic divisions, has its own linguistic peculiarities, the divergence being far greater between the tribes which speak Fanti than between those which speak Akan. Indeed the Fanti dialect may be further subdivided into the dialects of Cape Coast, Elmina, Anamaboe, Arbrah, Akumfi, Adjumaco, Gomoah, and Agona. The principal difference between Akan and Fanti is that the latter is more sibilant, *t* and *d* in the former becoming *ts* and *dz* in Fanti before the vowels *e* and *i*. The number of words not common to both is insig-

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nificant, and the members of different tribes have no difficulty in understanding one another. To the south-east and south-west of the Gold Coast are found tribes who speak the northern dialect, but this seeming exception to the general rule is explained by the fact that the people now occupying those districts were driven southward in comparatively recent times by reverses in war. In Ahanta and Wassaw, and in the south of Agona and Gomoah, dialects of a language, probably that of an older people who formerly inhabited the southern portions of the Gold Coast, still exist, and it is perhaps to a mingling of the southern Tshis with this people that the divergence between Akan and Fanti is due. The families in which such dialects prevail are now few in number, and their language for ordinary use is the Tshi.

In the following description of the Tshi language, as exemplified by the Fanti dialect, the vowels are pronounced as under:

u	as *oo*.
ŭ	as *u* in *fun*, *gun*, etc.
ah	as in the interjection *ah*.
a	as in the word *bat*.
eh	as *a* in the words *bay*, *say*, etc.
e	as in the words *met*, *set*, etc.
i	as *e* in the word *me*.
ew	as in the words *few*, *dew*.
ow	as in the words *cow*, *sow*.
ei	as *y* in the word *by*.

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Nouns.

In Tshi nouns have but one gender. The plural is usually formed as under.

(1). Nouns commencing with a consonant by the prefix *eh*. Thus :

Patteh (turkey-buzzard) ; pl. *ehpatteh.*

(2). Nouns commencing with a vowel, by *in* or *im* being substituted for the vowel. Thus :

Aponchi (goat) ; pl. *inponchi.*

Nouns commencing with the letter *b*, frequently form the plural, as if they commenced with a vowel. Thus :

Behsia (woman) ; pl. *imbehsia.*

Some nouns have the plural formed irregularly, but these are few in number. The most common are :

Sáhfi (key) ; pl. *ensáhfiwah.*
Sin (a piece or portion) ; pl. *asinasin.*
Brenni (white man) ; pl. *Brohfo.*

Nouns descriptive of the characteristics or occupation of an individual are generally compounded of a verb, with the prefix *o*, and the suffix *fo*, which imply personality. Thus :

Srah (to watch)	*osrahfo* (watchman, scout).
Tohroh (to lie)	*otohrohfo* (liar).

Many nouns, however, denoting a quality, are frequently expressed by an adjective. The numerals are nouns rather than adjectives.

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Adjectives.

Adjectives have no comparative, and many are commonly expressed,

(1). By nouns denoting a quality, placed before the nouns they qualify.

(2). By verbs.

The latter is the more common method, and the verbs can, of course, be conjugated Thus, "sick, afraid, contented," are expressed by the verbs *yarri* (to be sick), *suro* (to be afraid), *pinni* (to be contented). There is also frequently an adjective expressing the same quality. Thus "bright" can be expressed by the verb *hoa* (to be bright), or by the adjective *kankan.*

Adjectives denoting a personal quality are often formed of a noun denoting a quality with the prefix *o*, and suffix *fo.* Thus:

Nimdzi (knowledge)	*onimdzifo* (clever).
Bengkum (the left)	*obengkumfo* (left-handed).

In conversation the prefix *o* is generally elided.

Adverbs.

There are, properly speaking, none; but adverbs are rendered—(1). By verbs. (2). By nouns.

Thus "quite" is expressed by the verb *wieh* (to finish, accomplish), or by the verb *kura* (to fill), "away" by the verb *kor* (to go), and "out" by the verb *fi* (to come out of). "Behind" is expressed by the noun *ehchi* (the back), "forward" by the noun *anim* (face), "above" by *soh*, or *assoro*, (top, upper part), and "down" by *assi* or *fohm* (lower part, floor).

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Adverbs, which in English are formed by adding "ly" to an adjective, are expressed in Tshi by the adjective corresponding.

Negative adverbs require the negative form of the verb (see *Verbs*); and *ehbi, ehbinom,* (some) *behbi, behbiara* (somewhere, anywhere, elsewhere), mean "none" and "nowhere" when used with the negative form of the verb.

"Not" is commonly expressed by the negative form of the verb "to be."

Conjunctions.

There are but six in the language—

1. *Ni,* or *ehni, n'* before a vowel—"and."
2. *Seh*—"if" or "that."
3. *Nah* or *nahnso,* "but, also, moreover." With negative form of verb signifies "nor."
4. *Ah* at the end of a sentence signifies "when;" placed elsewhere it signifies "what."
5. *Anah* or *anah seh,* "or."
6. *Sah-bi* or *sah-ara,* "likewise."

Other conjunctions are expressed by combinations of the above with pronouns, nouns, or verbs; or by verbs alone. Thus:

jeh seh (*jeh*—to release, cease) = unless, accept.
siani seh (*siani*—to happen) = because, for.
chen (to exceed, to be more than) is used to express "than."

Interjections.

Interjections are commonly expressed by short sentences, or by verbs. Thus:

Yeh dzinih (*yeh,* v. to be; *dzinih,* n. silence) = hush, or hark.
Fweh (to look) = lo, or behold.
Meh wuh (literally, "I am dying") is used as an interjection expressive of fear, pain, grief, or surprise, the vowel sound in *uh* being lengthened in the first three cases.

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Prepositions.

There are, properly speaking, none; but prepositions are expressed in Tshi in the following modes:

(1). By verbs. These are generally prepositions which imply a direction.

(2). By nouns, used after other nouns or pronouns.

(3). By verbs and nouns together.

Thus:

1. *Kor* (to go) signifies "to go to." *Meh rokor Prahsu*, "I am going to Prahsu." The verbs *dzi kor*, and *dzi bah*, similarly express "to." *Tchwa* (to cut, chop, sever) is used to signify "across."

2. The noun *mu* (interior, inner part) is used to signify "in." Very frequently the *u* is omitted. Thus *ekru* (country), *ekru m'* (in the country). *Soh*, *assoro* (summit, upper part), are used to express "above, on, over;" *assi* and *fohm* (lower part, floor, ground), "below, down, under, beneath."

3. The verb *fi* (to come out of), and the noun *mu* (interior), signify together, "out of, from." They may be placed either in juxtaposition, or separated by other words. Thus: *Mu fi Mansu meh rokor Prahsu* (from Mansu I am going to Prahsu); *o fi wurra m'* (he goes from the bush). *Fah* (to have, get) and *mu* signify together "through."

Articles.

There are no articles, either definite or indefinite. If any object has to be specially defined, it is usual to place a pronoun after the noun, as *Behsia no* (that woman). The indefinite article can only be expressed by placing the adjectives *bi* (some) or *bi ara* (any) after the noun, as *Behsia bi* (some woman), *i.e.*, a woman.

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Pronouns.

(1). Personal.

The personal pronouns are :

I—*Meh, m'* before a or o, *mi* before i or u.
Thou—*Awuh* or *'wuh.*
He or she—*ni, onnu, o* before a verb, but *w'* before a past tense.
We—*Hyen* or *yen. Yeh* before a verb.
You—*Awuh, 'wuh,* or *hum.*
They—*Won. Wor* before a verb.

The possessive case is formed by *dzeh* or *dzea* after the pronoun. Thus: *meh dzeh,* or *meh dzea,* "mine." The objective case is formed by placing *hu* after the pronoun.

The compound personal pronouns are formed by placing *ára* or *ankarsa* after the pronoun. *Ára* (very) is used to emphasize or intensify the personality, and *ankarsa* means "the one speaking." Thus: *m' ara, m' ankarsa* (myself); *won ara, won ankarsa* (themselves.)

(2). Relative.

The relative pronouns are :

Hwana (who); *hwana dzeh* or *hwana dzea* (whose); *ben, den ehden* (what); *no, ehno, nea* (that); *yi, ehyi* (this). "Which" is expressed by *nea o ben.*

Verbs.

English verbs are frequently rendered in Tshi:

(1). By two verbs.

(2). By a verb followed by a noun objective.

(3). By a verb preceded by a noun subjective.

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(4). By two verbs, followed by one or two nouns objective.

Examples :

1. *Dan* (to turn), and *mah* (to give), signify together "to return;" *fi* (to come out of), and *gwan* (to flee), "to escape;" *san* (to open, turn), and *nya* (to get), "to regain, recover."

2. *Kah* (to speak, allege), and *anim* (face), signify together "to scold, to correct;" *dzi* (to be), and *ehchiri* (back), "to be behind, to follow," and hence, "to imitate;" *siw* (to stop), and *akwan* (road), "to bar, obstruct."

3. *Unsu* (water), and *tor* (to fall), signify together "to rain;" *hoh* (body), and *popo* (to move or shake), "to tremble, to shiver;" *ahhum* (breath), and *guh* (to pour out), "to rest."

4. *Dzi* (to be, have, do), and *bah* (to come), signify together with an objective noun, "to bring." Thus, *dzi kahnea bah* (to bring a light). *Dzi* and *kor* (to go), similarly signify "to take away." *Dzi kahnea kor* (to take away a light). *Fah* (to take, have, get), and *yeh* (to do, effect), signify together with the noun *abbah* (child) "to adopt," *fah yeh abbah.*

In cases 1 and 4 the first verb is generally one of the three following :

(*a*) *dzi*—to be, commit, do, exercise, execute, have, take, use.

(*b*) *yeh*—to be, become, commit, do, effect, exercise, form, get, happen, make, seem.

(*c*) *fah*—to get, have, take, choose, pick out.

So that these three may be termed auxiliary verbs.

Verbs have but two moods, the indicative and the imperative. There are no passive verbs. The indicative mood has the following tenses—present, future, perfect, aorist. It should be observed, however, that most verbs have no perfect, and a great many neither perfect nor aorist.

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In most verbs the present tense is formed by the prefix *ro* or *ri*, to the root; the future by the prefix *a*, *ah*, *e*, or *or*, to the root in the first person singular, and by the prefixes *ba*, *be*, or *bo* in the rest of the tense; the perfect by the prefix *ar* or *o*, and the aorist by a shortening or emphasizing of the root.

As in English, the second person plural is used equally for the second person singular, which latter is therefore omitted in the following example:

Bah—to come.

INDICATIVE MOOD.

Present Tense.

Meh ribah.
O ribah.
Yeh ribah.
Awuh ribah.
Wor ribah.

Future Tense.

M' abbah.
O babbah.
Yeh babbah.
Awuh babbah.
Wor babbah.

Perfect Tense.

M' arbah.
W' arbah.
Yeh arbah.
Awuh arbah.
Wor arbah.

Aorist.

Meh bei.
O bei.
Etc., etc.

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IMPERATIVE MOOD.

Bah	Come.	*Miombah*	Let us come.
Mombah	Let him come.	*Morwombah*	Let them come.

Kor—to go.

Pres.	*meh rokor.*	Perf.	*m' okor.*
Fut.	*m' orkor.*	Aorist.	*meh kreh.*
	o borkor.		

Nŭm—to drink.

Pres.	*meh ronŭm.*	Aorist.	*m' arnŭm.*
Fut.	*m' ornŭm.*		
	o bornŭm.		

Karsa—to speak, talk.

Pres.	*meh rokarsa.*	Aorist.	*meh karséh.*
Fut.	*m' ahkarsa.*		
	o bahkarsa.		

Sĕro—to laugh.

Pres.	*meh risĕro*	Aorist.	*meh sero-i.*
Fut.	*m' ahsĕro*		
	o bahsĕro		

Verbs which differ from the above differ only in the formation of the present tense, where the prefix *ro* or *ri* is omitted. In the other tenses they follow what appears to be the ordinary rule.

Examples:

Tseh (to hear).	Pres.	*meh tseh.*
Nyan (to awake).	Pres.	*meh nyan.*
Peh (to like).	Pres.	*meh peh.*

Verbs are also conjugated negatively. The rule throughout appears to be:

(1). In the present tense:

(*a*) If the verb be one with which the prefix *ro* or *ri* be used, that prefix is dropped, and the word *yen* interposed between the pronoun and the verb.

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(*b*) If the verb be one with which the prefix *ro* or *ri* be not used, *n* or *m* is placed before the verb if it commences with a consonant, and if with a vowel, after the vowel or letters giving the vowel sound.

(2). In the future tense a prefix *onk* is added to the verb as it stands in the first person singular positive.

(3). In the past tenses a prefix *n* or *m* is added if the verb commences with a consonant, and if with a vowel, after the vowel or letters giving the vowel sound.

(4). In the imperative mood *mam* is prefixed to the verb root in the singular, and *mah* placed before the verb in the plural.

Thus the negatives of the examples given above are:

Nkor—not to go.

Pres.	*meh yen kor.*	Perf.	*m' onkor.*
Fut.	*m' onkorkor.* / *o' onkorkor.*	Aorist.	*meh nkreh.*

Nnŭm—not to drink.

Pres.	*meh yen nŭm.*	Aorist.	*m' arnnŭm.*
Fut.	*m' onkornŭm.* / *o' onkornŭm.*		

Nkarsa—not to speak.

Pres.	*meh yen karsa.*	Aorist.	*meh nkarséh.*
Fut.	*m' onkarsa.* / *o' onkarsa.*		

Nsĕro —not to laugh.

Pres.	*meh yen sĕro.*	Aorist.	*meh nsero-i.*
Fut.	*m' onkahsĕro.* / *o onkahsĕro.*		

Ntseh	(not to hear).	Pres.	*meh ntseh.*
Nnyan	(not to awake).	Pres.	*meh nnyan.*
Npeh	(not to like).	Pres.	*meh npeh.*

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The imperative in the negative of *bah* (to come) is :

mambah.	*mah miombah.*
mom mambah.	*mah morwombah.*

Whenever an English verb is expressed by two in Tshi, each of the latter requires to be preceded by its personal pronoun. Thus the present tense of *dzi kahnea bah* (to bring a light) is *meh dzi kahnea meh ribah.* The first of two verbs appears always to be used in the present tense, while the second varies as required. Thus :

Pres.	*meh dzi kahnea meh ribah.*
Fut.	*meh dzi kahnea m' abbah.*
Aorist.	*meh dzi kahnea meh bei.*

When two verbs are used together in the negative, the first only has the negative conjugation, and, if the second verb has the *ro* or *ri* prefix in the present tense, it is omitted.

Thus :

Kor fweh—to visit (literally, to go—to look).

Pres. Positive.	*meh rokor meh rofweh*
Pres. Negative.	*meh yen kor meh fweh.*

The verb *dzi* is never conjugated negatively, and wherever it appears in the positive, it is replaced by the verb *fah* in the negative.

Thus :

Meh dzi kahnea meh ribah (I am bringing a light) becomes in the negative *meh yen fah kahnea meh bah.*

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There is, as is commonly the case with the languages of the lower races, a great paucity of abstract terms in Tshi, and the language is entirely deficient of such terms as space, tone, species, colour, quantity, sex, degree, etc. For instance, "tone" could only be expressed by *enni* (voice), and "colour" by *edúru* (dye), or *suhbŭn* (appearance). This absence of abstract terms is possibly due to the fact that such could not well have an onomatopœic origin, as they are not ideas easily expressible by corresponding sounds.

It is also deficient in terms denoting colours, a peculiarity not uncommon amongst uncultured peoples. There are but distinct terms for three colours, viz., *tuntum* (black), *memin*, *biri*, or *korkor* (red), and *fufu*, *fihtah*, or *furuban* (white). The term for "black" is also used to express any dark colour, such as blue, purple, brown, etc.; and those for "red" similarly do duty for pink, orange, and yellow. "Gray" could only be expressed by "wood-ashes," and "green" by "tree" or "leaf."

Terms of endearment are also few in number. There is no equivalent for "dear" or "beloved." *Meh yunku papah* (my good friend) is the nearest. There is also no verb "to love," and *peh* (to like) has to be used to express it. There is a verb *dor*, which is sometimes translated "to love," but it seems really to mean "to increase, make much of."

At a rough calculation there are from three hundred and fifty to four hundred different words, which, by a variety of combinations, are built up into a number of terms. The whole of these separate words may probably

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be referred to less than seventy roots. The following are examples of some combinations:

Addanmu (room, apartment). *Addan* (house), *mu* (interior).

Adzifirifo (creditor). *Adzi* (property), *firi* (to lend), *fo* (person).

Ahhohmadzen (health, strength). *Hoh* (body), *mu* (interior), *adzen* (strong, hard).

Akwancherifo (guide). *Akwan* (road), *cheri* (to show), *fo* (person).

Ensahtsiabah (finger). *Ensah* (hand), *tsia* (small), *abbah* (child). "Little child of the hand."

Ensahtsiahin (middle-finger). *Ensah* (hand), *tsia* (small), *ehin* (chief). "Little chief of the hand."

A rearrangement of the same words is frequently the only difference between a verb and a noun. Thus:

Boh gwah, v. to assemble, consult.

Gwah boh, n. council.

Sometimes the same arrangement serves for both verb and noun. Thus:

Anim guh assi, v. to be ashamed. (Lit., "to put the face lower.")

Animgúassi, n. shame, disgrace.

Ani wuh, v. to be ashamed. (Lit., "the eye dies.")

Aniwuh, n. shame, disgrace.

Some of the verbs are curious:

Nam assi yeh	(to walk—under—to do)	= to act by stealth.
Ni obi kor	(to be—some one—to go)	= to accompany.
Kum anim	(to kill—face)	= to frown.
Karsa mah	(to speak—to give)	= to apologise.
Huh ahnu	(to find—mouth)	= to comprehend, to guess.
Jih tsi	(to accept—to hear)	= to believe.
Kah cheri	(to speak—to show)	= to explain.
Huh mah	(to feel—to give)	= to sympathise.
Tchwa karsa mu	(to cross—to speak—in)	= to interrupt.
Tchwa ahnu	(to cross—mouth)	= to anticipate.
Ani biri	(the eye—to grow red)	= to lust, be envious.

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One word frequently has to serve for a variety of meanings. Thus *dwŭă* (tree) means also stick, stalk, plant, and pole. Placed after *ahbŏă* (animal) it means "tail;" after *ihtur* (gun) it means "stock," and after *nimpah* (man) it means "figure, form." *Dwŭăbah* (tree children) = berry, seed, fruit; and *dwŭă-bassah* (tree arm) = branch, bough, twig.

Akwan, besides meaning "road," has the meanings of "chance, leave, liberty, permission." It appears also in the following:

Akwancherifo	(guide).	*Akwanhihia*	(a defile).
Akwanmŭă	(footpath).	*Jih kwan*	(to release).
Mah kwan	(to admit).	*Mu kwan*	(entrance).
Fweh kwan	(to expect).	*Nam kwan*	(to journey).
Piri kwan	(to step).	*Siw kwan*	(to obstruct).
Yi kwan	(to prepare).	*Toh kwan*	(to go astray).
Akwanmusŭm	(news).	*Tuh kwan*	(to depart).

(Lit., "words in the road.")

Similarly *ahnu* (mouth) means also "brim, edge, tip, point, number, price."

Ahnuadzen	(strong mouth)	= insolence.
Ahnutsintsin	(tip—long)	= pointed.
Boah ahnu	(to aid—number)	= to assemble.
Buh ahnu	(to consider—number)	= to count.
Kor ahnu	(to go—mouth)	= to meet.
Unsuahnu	(water—edge)	= beach, river-bank.
Yi ahnu	(to yield—mouth)	= to confess.

The foregoing examples are perhaps sufficient to show the nature of the language, and the manner in which words are combined so as to afford other meanings.

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The numerals are:

One	*ahku.*	Six	*essĭă.*
Two	*ehbien.*	Seven	*essŭn.*
Three	*ehbiahsŭn.*	Eight	*ahwotchwi.*
Four	*ahnŭn.*	Nine	*ahkuhn.*
Five	*ehnum.*	Ten	*eddu.*

It is not clear whether these words are derived, as is the case with so many uncivilised peoples, from the custom of counting on the fingers. *Ahku* (one) seems to mean "it is finished," and *ehbien* (two) "some one (or something) else." It is, however, possible that *essĭă* (six) is derived from *sissa* (to change), and meant originally "changed to the other hand," and that *ahkuhn* (nine) may have similarly originally meant "only one left." *Eddu* (ten) seems to be derived from *duh* (to reach, touch, or arrive at). Eleven, twelve, etc., are formed of ten-one, ten-two, etc.

Roots.

Su is the radical of water, and is found in the following words and in many others: *unsu* (water, fluid), *su* (to weep, mourn), *susor* (a drop), *assoro-su* (cloud), *supor* (island), *kusu* (gloomy, dark), *fusu* (moist, damp), *issum* (darkness), *fehsu* (dew), *ehsuwah* (a brook), *susuw* (to plumb, fathom, whence to measure, consider). From *su* (to weep) are probably derived *suro* (to fear) and *sum* (to serve, be under).

The root *gwe*, *gwa*, or *gwo* seems to imply a separating. It occurs in *gwoh* (to skin, peel), *gwan* (to flee, abscond, avoid), *gweh shirew* (to divorce), and *gwarri* (to wash). From the same root probably comes

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igwan (sheep), *egwah* (seat, stool), *dzi gwah* (to trade), and *igwohm* (market). *Jwehteh* (silver money, and hence, silver) has the same derivation. The story runs that the people, on first seeing small silver coins, gave them this name on account of their resemblance to the silvery scales of a fish. Most words in which the sound *gu* predominates were perhaps originally from this root. For instance *guh* (to pour out), *gurow* (to weaken).

The root *tchw* appears indicative of chopping, cutting, or tearing apart, and is perhaps onomatopœic. It occurs in *tchwa* (to cut, cross, chop), *tchwa* (scar), *tchwi* (to drag), *tchwiw* (to scour, rub), *tchwirrów* (to scrape, scratch, grate), *tchwirrabo* (gun-flint), *tchwen* (to await, expect). From the more original meaning a secondary one appears to have been derived, as in *tchwiri* (to slander), *tchi* (to hate). *Tsew* (to tear, rend), *tsia* (short), and *chen* (to divide), have perhaps the same derivation.

The roots *dji* and *she* appear to indicate heat. One is probably a corruption of the other. They occur in *ihdjia* (fire), *djentsŭă* (firebrand), *djiberu* (charcoal), *shew* (to burn), *shewshew* (hot), *sheren* (to glow, glare, shine), *shishew* (to scald), etc.

Si seems indicative of something below, low, or underneath, and hence, something commenced. It occurs in *assi* (under part), *si* (to go down, to build), *siani* (to happen), *sin* (a piece, fragment), *sisieh* (to prepare), *sieh* (to bury), *sisi* (to deceive), etc.

So seems indicative of something above, or over. Thus, *so*, *sóro* (upper part), *assoro* (summit, sky), *soh* (to lift, raise), *sorri* (to rise, get up), *sŏă* (to carry), *ahdesŏă* (burden), *sodifo* (ruler), etc.

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The root *wi* seems indicative of something done slowly or cautiously, and hence stealthily. It occurs in *wia* (to creep, crawl), *wi* (stealth), *wifo* (thief), *wieh* (to accomplish, complete), *wiri fi* (to forget), *wen* (to watch), *weh* (to chew), *wiwi* (paramour), because seen by stealth, *enwia* (tree sloth), *nwin* (to knit, plait), *enwhi* (hair). *Wuh* (to decay, die) has perhaps the same origin.

Fi appears to indicate something appearing, or coming forth. Thus *fi* (to come out of), *fih* (to vomit), *fifiri* (perspiration), *fifisih* (a rash), *firi* (to lend), *fifi* (to grow), *fem* (to borrow), *few* (to suck), *fitsi* (to bore, pierce), *fira* (to spin, twist), *fehsu* (dew), *afiri* (trap, snare), etc. *Fah* (to get, choose, pick out), whence *effah* (half), and a variety of compound words, has perhaps the same derivation.

The root *hu* seems indicative of blowing, bubbling, frothing, etc. It occurs in *huhu* or *hutah* (to blow with the mouth), *hŭd* (to smell), *huhteh* (fan), *hurrŭm* (to yawn), *huhra* (to hoot), *huntamah* (dust), *eh-huru* (bubble, foam, froth), *eh-hum* (breeze), *eh-hun* (swelling), *eh-hunadzi* (vanity), *ah-huhm* (breath), *ah-huhmboh* (surprise), *ih-hu* (fear), *tuh hu* (to boast), *huru* (to boil), etc.

Towns and villages are generally named after the founder, or from some local peculiarity. Thus Winnebah is called Simpah, after Simpun, the traditional founder; Anamaboe, or, more properly, Anamabo, means "Bird Rock;" Coomassie (Kumassi), "Under the Kum tree;" Inquabim (Incobehm'), "Place of Cocoanuts;" Mankassim, "Great town;" Mansu, "Water-town;" Prahsu, "Prah water;" Salt Pond or Inchinfo,

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"Salt-sellers." On the road to the Prah from Cape Coast there is a village named Ahkokor-ronum-unsu, which means "The fowl drinks water." Cormantine (Krumehntsi) means "I didn't hear of the town."

There are a few words of foreign derivation, relating principally to novelties introduced by higher races. Thus *siccan*, "knife," appears to be derived from the Arabic *sikkin*, and *krahteh*, "paper," is probably from *kartas*. *Assah*, "war," and *Assah-fo*, "army," may be from the Arabic *askar*, *asawah*. Traces of the Portuguese occupation of the Gold Coast remain in such words as *pahno*, "bread," and *kamisa*, "shirt." The words of English derivation principally refer to household utensils, or articles used in trade; as *korpo*, "cup," *jihrarsi*, "glass," *poinsin*, "puncheon." The Tshis appear to be unable to pronounce "gl, fl, sl, pl," etc., and there are no words, as far as I can ascertain, in which the letter "l" occurs, except such as are derived from other languages, as *tummel*, "tumbler."

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CHAPTER XXII.

MUSIC.

As is the case with all uncivilised peoples, music is amongst the Tshi-speaking tribes limited to airs possessing an obvious rhythm. It is, in fact, music in its infancy. Such airs seem to appeal directly to a primitive sense common to all peoples, for there are few persons who are wholly insensible to, or are unable to distinguish, a simple melody; while the appreciation of music in its higher forms is the result of a deliberate and careful cultivation of this primitive sense, which can only be attained in civilised communities, and even then only by a minority; for, with the masses, simple melodies still remain the more popular.

The influence of music, even upon civilised peoples, who have been disciplined for centuries to control and subdue the exhibition of emotion and excitement, is very great; and one need only refer to its influence on the religious sentiment, notably in "revivals," and to its value as a stimulant to martial ardour, to exemplify this fact; but upon savages, that is, upon children with the passions and powers of men, its influence is immense, and the state of excitement into which an

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assemblage of uncivilised people may be worked by the mere rhythm of drums and the repetition of a simple melody, would hardly be credited. With most races, this known emotional influence of music has been utilised with three objects, viz., to stimulate the religious sentiment, the military spirit, and the sexual passions; and the Tshis form no exception to this general rule. In the first case the priests have early seen its influence, and have applied it to their own purposes; chiefs and rulers utilise it in the second case; and the youth of the towns and villages in the third, when the drums sound for moonlight dances.

The instruments commonly in use on the Gold Coast are drums, horns made of elephants' tusks, the *duduben*, a long wooden instrument played like a clarionet, and the *sehnku*, a species of guitar. Calabashes filled with shells are used as rattles to mark the time. Drums are made of the hollowed sections of trunks of trees, with a goat's or sheep's skin stretched over one end. They are from one foot to four feet high, and vary in diameter from about six to fourteen inches. Two or three drums are usually used together, each drum producing a different note, and they are played either with the fingers or with two sticks. The lookers-on generally beat time by clapping the hands.

To a European, whose ear and mind are untrained for this special faculty, the rhythm of a drum expresses nothing beyond a repetition of the same note at different intervals of time; but to a native it expresses much more. To him the drum can and does speak, the sounds produced from it forming words, and the whole

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measure or rhythm a sentence. In this way, when company drums are being played at an *ehsúdu*, they are made to express and convey to the bystanders a variety of meanings. In one measure they abuse the men of another company, stigmatising them as fools and cowards; then the rhythm changes, and the gallant deeds of their own company are extolled. All this, and much more, is conveyed by the beating of drums, and the native ear and mind, trained to detect and interpret each beat, is never at fault. The language of the drums is as well understood as that which they use in their daily life.

Each chief has his own call or motto, sounded by a particular beat of his drums. Thus the drums of Boakje Tsin-tsin, the Ashanti envoy who came to the coast during what has been termed the Ashanti Scare of 1881, used to say:

Donko-i didi m'ăhtum. On esséh?

The first sentence being produced on a large drum, and the second on a smaller one, pitched a note or two higher. The rhythm may be roughly shown thus:

Dōnkŏ-ĭ | *dĭdĭ m'āh* | *tūm.* | — | *On ĕsséh?*

This literally means, "Slaves abuse me. Why?" and may be freely rendered by, "What care I for the opinion of the vulgar herd?"

The drums of Amankwa Tia, the Ashanti general who fought against us in the war of 1873-4, used to say:

Pĭrĭ hūh	*Pĭrĭ hūh*
Hasten	Hasten

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Similar mottoes are also expressed by means of horns, and an entire stranger to the locality can at once translate the rhythm into words. Once, when talking to a native about the chief of an inland town, I asked what his motto, or drum-call, was. Said the native: "I do not know. I have never heard his drum. If I could hear it, I could tell you what it said."

Songs consist of a recitative, with a short chorus. The recitative is often improvised, one taking up the song when another is tired. Frequently the words have reference to current events, and it is not uncommon for singers to note the peculiarities of persons who may pass, and improvise at their expense. This is particularly the case when the strangers are Europeans, as the latter do not as a rule understand Tshi, and the singers can allow themselves greater latitude than would be the case if their remarks were understood.

The following are examples of native airs, but thus written they give but a poor idea of the effect produced by some thirty or forty voices, with reed flutes and drums, which all blend harmoniously.

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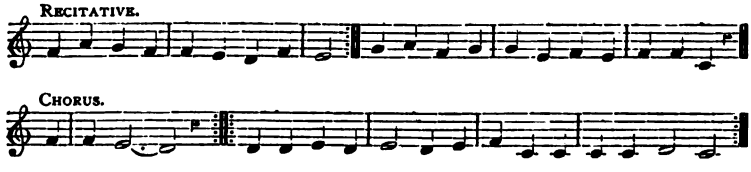

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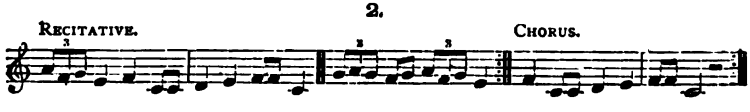

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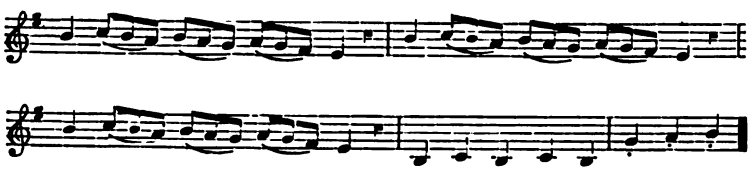

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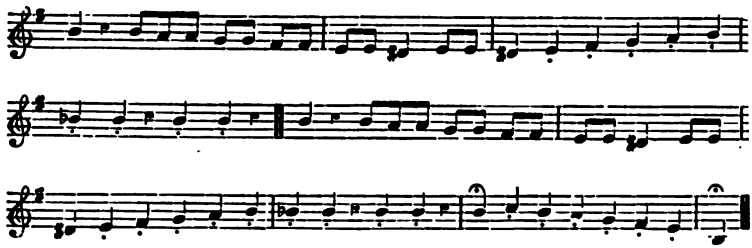
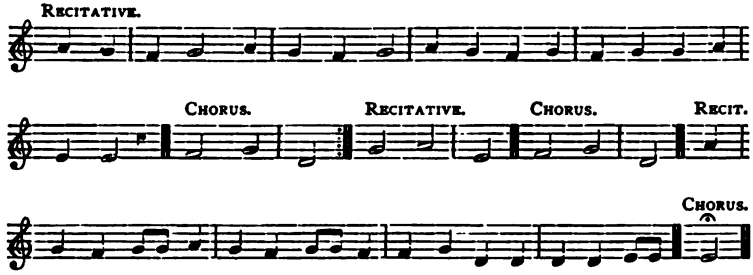


5.—Suhman Kwasi.



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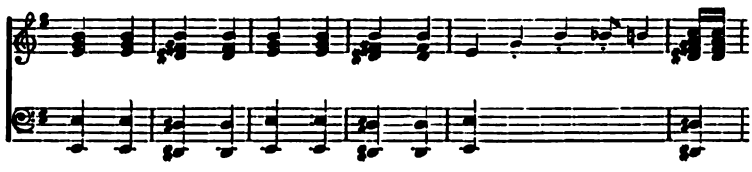

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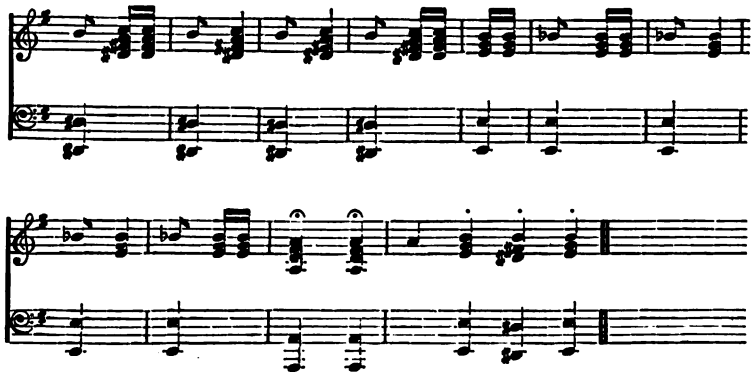

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CHAPTER XXIII.

TRADITIONS AND FOLK-LORE.

1.—*Tradition of the Migration from the Interior.*

"In the beginning, the Fantis, Ashantis, Gamans, and all people speaking our language, lived in a far country, beyond Salagha. There was not much bush there. The land was flat, and covered with grass, and the people had plenty of cows and sheep. To them came another people, joined to the Mohammedans. It is said they were the Fulas: they were of a red colour. These people were strong, and they took the cows, and sheep, and young women. They oppressed the black people and held them of no account. They made them their slaves to work, cutting wood, and hoeing the ground, and carrying their goods. The black people bore their hardships for some time, but at last they were too great to be borne; and then by twos and threes they stole away, leaving the country of grass, and going into the thick forest, where they hid. The Fulas sent after them, but could not find them; and many others of the blacks continuing to run away, by-and-by there were plenty in the forest, and they made villages in

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secret places. After very many years, when they had become great in number, the Fulas heard of them, and came to capture them all as slaves. But the Fulas could not fight in the forest, and were driven back. Many times they returned again, but each time, though the struggle was hard, they were defeated, and at last they ceased to come. Then the blacks multiplied, and built many towns and villages. As they wanted more land they came downwards, for they could not go up to the grass country, as the Fulas were there. No one was living in the forest country, and thus, after many years always coming downwards, they reached the sea. And when they saw the sea, with the waves leaping, and the white foam hissing and frothing on the beach, they thought it was all boiling water, and they were much afraid. But after some days, one ventured to touch the water, and found it was not hot. So they called it *Eh-huru den o nni shew* (Boiling water that is not hot); and to this day, in the far parts of Ashanti and Gaman, it is still said that the sea is boiling water. The black people worshipped the sea, calling it *Bohsŭm' poh.*".

In connection with this tradition it may be mentioned that the Fulas, a pastoral Mohammedan people, possess numerous states in the interior; and the northern tribes are of a tawny red colour, with soft silky hair. They have never penetrated the forest country on this part of the coast, for it is a remarkable fact that in Africa the Mohammedans have never been able to conquer, except where cavalry can be used. The Fulas always fight on horseback, hence they "could not fight in the forest."

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The Arabs had, before the eleventh century, formed several states in the interior, and in these the Mohammedans formed the ruling part of the population. The most important of these kingdoms was that of Ghana, supposed to have been situated to the north-east of Ashanti, near the present Sokato. The king of Ghana was absolute over his own subjects, but acknowledged the supremacy of the Abasside caliph. Now to the king of Ghana belonged Wangara, or "The Land of Gold;" and in modern maps this name is applied to that unknown territory to the north of, and adjoining, Ashanti.* To the south of Wangara lay a forest country called Lam-lam, and the Arabian historians tell us that the savage inhabitants of this country were hunted by the nations of the Niger, and sold to the slave-merchants of Barbary and Egypt. Of the interior of Lam-lam, and of what lay beyond it, the Arabs were ignorant. Now it may well have been that the inhabitants of Lam-lam were the Tshi-speaking tribes, and that Lam-lam was no other than the forest country of the Gold Coast. In fact, all the evidence obtainable seems to point that way; but when the Portuguese first visited the Gold Coast, that is to say, between the years 1463 and 1481, they found the country occupied by peoples already possessing tribal distinctions. The question is, therefore, whether some four hundred and fifty years was a period of time sufficiently long to have allowed the refugees from the plains of the interior to have spread over the whole of the forest country, and to have broken up into various tribal groups.

* The Mohammedans in Coomassie informed Mr. Dupuis in 1821 that Ashanti itself was included in Wangara.

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That the sea-board states of the Gold Coast were uninhabited at the time of any such southerly migration of the Tshi-speaking people, the existence of dialects of an older language, to which I have already referred, seems to disprove. These dialects are now locally known as the Fetu, or Effutu. There was a former kingdom of Fetu, which, at the end of the seventeenth century, extended from the River Behnya, at Elmina, to about two miles east of Cape Coast; but that the people of this kingdom spoke the language now called Fetu is unlikely, for Bosman, writing in 1701 from Elmina, which was a Fetu town, tells us that they spoke the same language as the other southern tribes.

2.—*Origin of the names Ashanti and Fanti.*

The traditional origin of the names Ashanti and Fanti, probably has reference to the time when the inhabitants of the forest country were exposed to attacks from some northern people. It is that, ages past, when the Fantis and Ashantis formed one nation, they were, whilst engaged in war with some inland power, reduced to the verge of starvation by the destruction of their provision grounds. In this extremity they saved themselves, some by eating of a plant named *shan*, and others of a plant named *fan*; and these two words, together with the verb *di*, "to eat," made the names Shan-di and Fan-di, which in course of time became Ashanti and Fanti. The verb *di* is so pronounced in the Akan, or northern dialect of Tshi; in the southern dialect it is now pronounced *dzi*.

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The native name of the plant thus said to have been eaten by the Fantis is *seppiriba*. This, when cooked, is still termed *fan*.

3.—*Legend of the Giants of the Sea.*

According to local tradition, the villages of Assaybu (Assibo), "under the rock," and Moree were founded by giants, who came from the sea. Two chiefs of the sea, who were brothers, determined to migrate to the land; and, accompanied by a number of followers, emerged from the sea, after a journey of five days, on the beach near Anamaboe. The two leaders, who were giants, and whose names were Amamfi and Kwegia, had reached dry land, and the long retinue of their followers was still struggling through the surf, when a hunter chanced to come upon them. Astonished at this spectacle, at the appearance of the giants, and the multitude emerging from the sea, he clapped his hands together, and exclaimed, "What a number!" when immediately all who had not got clear of the water were at once turned into stone, and their bodies, in the shape of rocks, may still be seen extending far out into the ocean in a line. Amamfi and Kwegia, with those of their followers who survived, walked along the beach as far as the Iron Hills, where the former struck inland and proceeded to Assaybu, where he settled, while the latter continued along the beach to Moree, and there established himself.

Kwegia was a fisherman, and is regarded as the founder of that industry; while Amamfi is considered the father of agriculturists. Six iron bars were required

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to make the bill-hook of the latter, and the point of it, which became broken off, and was afterwards found in the bush, was alone sufficient to make six bill-hooks of ordinary size. Every Friday Amamfi proceeded to Moree to see Kwegia, wherefore he appointed that day as one of rest for agriculturists. One day, having nothing to carry back, he picked up some cannon lying under the fort at Moree, and carried them to Assaybu, where they may still be seen.* Amamfi was the first person to make palm-wine.

The Fantis, who then resided in and about Abrakampa, and had not occupied the sea-coast, regarded Amamfi and his followers as intruders; and as Amamfi very commonly, after sharpening his bill-hook, used to try its edge upon a Fanti, the latter could hardly regard the Assaybus as friends. The result was that they took up arms, and endeavoured to expel the intruders; but in every engagement that ensued, the extraordinary strength of Amamfi caused the victory to remain with his people. In the meantime, however, the giant had been attacked by guinea-worm, and the Fantis, learning that he was disabled, determined to make one more effort. In the battle that followed Amamfi was absent, till, hearing that his followers were being worsted, he got up and approached the scene of action. But he arrived too late to be of any assistance, and finding his people in full flight, he suddenly vanished. The Assaybus having thus been defeated through the illness of their chief, it became a proverb that "Amamfi fears nothing so much as the guinea-worm."

* The small pieces of iron ordnance lying in the main street of Assaybu, were really taken there during the Ashanti war of 1824.

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In the foregoing, the discovery of palm-wine is attributed to Amamfi; the following, however, disagrees with this version.

4.—*The Discovery of Palm-Wine.*

When the Fantis were marching from the interior to the sea-coast, the people already living in the forest tried to stop them, and the Fantis had to fight their way through.* The scouts who headed the march were led by a celebrated hunter, named Ansah. This man had with him a dog, which always accompanied him; and one day, when out scouting, it led him to a palm-tree, which had been thrown down by an elephant that had bored a hole in it with its tusk, in order to drink the sap. Ansah observed the sap still flowing from the hole, and fearing to taste it himself, lest it might be poisonous, gave some to his dog. Next day, finding that the dog had suffered no ill effects, he himself drank some of it. He found it so pleasant that he drank of it till he fell down dead drunk, and lay in a senseless state the whole day, to the great alarm of the Fantis and their king, who thought he was lost. On recovering his senses, he filled an earthen pot with the fluid, and took it to the king; to whom he described its effects and whence it was obtained. The king, having tasted the palm-wine, also liked it so much that he, too, drank of it till he fell senseless. His people seeing this, and imagining that Ansah had poisoned him, at

* This is directly at variance with the statement in the first tradition in this chapter.

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once fell upon the unfortunate hunter and slew him without giving him time to explain. When the king awoke and learned what had happened, he was exceedingly angry, and ordered those who had slain Ansah to be immediately put to death. In honour of Ansah's memory he directed palm-wine to be called *ansah*, a name which has now become corrupted to *ensa*. In later times, when the Fantis became acquainted with rum, they called that also *ensa;* but in order to distinguish it from palm-wine, they added to the name of the latter *fufu*, "white," so that palm-wine is now called *ensa fufu*.

5.—*Why goats do not smell sweet.*

Long ago, before the Portuguese came to the Gold Coast, there was a goddess who was celebrated for the delicate perfume she emitted, and which was caused by some rare ointment with which she anointed herself. All the animals were delighted with this perfume, but the goats most of all. They took so much pleasure in it that they were bold enough to ask the goddess to give them some of it; so that they might have the perfume always with them, even when she was absent. To this request the goddess seemingly consented; but really, to punish their impertinence, took a pot of bad-smelling ointment, and with this she anointed them. The smell of this ointment was so powerful that it has lasted to this day. The goats, however, were unable to detect the difference in smell, and were very well pleased with their perfume; and, in order to prevent it being

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washed off, always sought shelter when rain fell—a habit which their descendants have continued to the present time.

There are two traditions concerning the origin of man. One of them says that all men are descended from a large spider (*anansi*). According to some, this *anansi* was sometimes a man and sometimes a spider, and it seems probable that this tradition merely points to the existence of some early chief, who was known to his fellows as "The Spider."

The other tradition is to the effect that three black men and three white, each with a woman of his own colour, were made by a god, who laid before them a covered calabash and a folded piece of paper, and told them they were to choose which they would have. The blacks had the first choice and chose the calabash, thinking it would contain everything they wanted; but on opening it they found only a piece of iron, a little gold, and some metals the uses of which they were unacquainted with. The paper fell to the lot of the whites, who, on opening it, found that it contained directions for making everything. The god, disgusted at the avarice of the blacks in having chosen the calabash, conducted the whites to the sea-shore, taught them how to build ships, and sent them away in one, telling them that they should become the masters of the blacks through the very gift which the latter had spurned.

This tradition seems to be of European invention. At all events it must be of a comparatively recent date, and have been invented after the advent of Europeans

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to the coast. Until the natives had seen white men they could not know that there were any such beings; and until they had been shown writing, they could not have known that it was possible to reduce a language to writing, and to transmit intelligence by means of characters on paper. They might have seen white men and written characters amongst the Mohammedan peoples to the north; but the reference to ships shows that the inventor of this tradition had Europeans in mind and not the inland peoples. I think this tradition can hardly be regarded as a genuine native one, and the god mentioned in it savours of a supreme being, a conception quite foreign to the native mind.

Another tradition says that when men first sprang up, it does not mention how, the organs of generation in both sexes were placed much more prominently in view for convenience of propagation, and that it was only after the world was sufficiently peopled that the gods moved them to their present positions.

The reason of time being reckoned by periods of forty days is explained by a fable which says that on every fortieth day a certain tree, commonly met with in the forest, drops its fruit, which is a kind of gourd. As the fruit drops all the birds cry out, and from it, says the fable, sprang most of the vegetables now used.

I have already mentioned the tradition which narrates that the whole of the Tshi-speaking tribes are descended from the twelve families enumerated in Chapter XIV. This tradition supports the theory that the race spread from the interior to the sea, for the names of these families, common to all the tribes,

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are words of the Akan or northern dialect; and they are still retained by the southern tribes, although they have in several cases a different word now in use for the animal or object from which the family designation is derived. Thus, the Corn-stalk family is still called *Abrutufo* by the southern tribes, although their more common term for a corn-stalk is *abŭroh-nan;* and the Parrot family, *Annonofo,* though the word for parrot in the southern dialect is *ehwiru.* None of these older families have titles borrowed from fish, and fish, for an inland people, in a country where the rivers are but small, would possess little importance. But nearly all the later family divisions are named after varieties of sea fish, such as the *Sarfu-n'ennam* and *Appei* families; for to a people living on the sea-coast fish is an important article of food. It seems probable, then, that the Tshi-speaking tribes did move down to the sea from the interior. Two traditions directly support this view, and there is the above indirect evidence. That there was an older race inhabiting the southern portions of the Gold Coast at the time of such a migration is, I think, certain. The existence of dialects of another language in widely separated localities of the south goes to prove this; and wherever these dialects exist, there also are found customs different to those of the Tshi-speaking tribes proper. Some of these I have already mentioned, such as the custom in Ahanta of separating from a wife after she has borne ten children; but a more marked variation is that, in the same district, time is still reckoned in some communities by periods of three weeks, instead of by the forty-day periods of the Tshis.

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The first week is called good, in which work may be done; the second, bad, in which nothing may be undertaken; and the third, neutral or indifferent, in which minor affairs may be looked after. To a mingling of the Tshis with this older people is probably due the southern dialect of the Tshi language; for that the northern dialect was originally the language of the southern tribes, the retention by the latter of the old Akan family names seems to prove fairly conclusively.

There are a great number of local tales in circulation, but they are very childish and trivial, and seemingly have no reference to any events of importance. I give the following, one of the best, as a specimen:

"Long ago there was in Moree a man who had not a tooth in his head. Once, when the people of Moree went to fight the Ashantis, this man was taken with them, to carry his father's baggage; but when the party reached Assaybu, he suddenly threw down his load, and commenced climbing a large tree. Those who were with him wondered why he was doing this, but they were much astonished on seeing that as he climbed he gradually assumed the appearance of an ape. They shouted and beat their drums, in order to frighten him back into his proper shape, and at last succeeded in so doing, but they had to take him from the tree by force. Fearing that if he remained with them he might escape into the forest, they sent the toothless man back to Moree; and, after this, he was never allowed to go into the bush. Some years passed by, and the toothless man married and had several children. One day, however, when he was at Cape Coast, to which place he had gone to sell fish,

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some of his companions asked him to accompany them to the bush, where they were going to fetch a new canoe. He willingly consented, and went with them to the place where the canoe was. His friends had no rope with them, with which to drag the canoe, so the toothless man offered to go into the forest and cut some creepers. But thence he never returned. As he did not soon come back his companions went to look for him, and found his cutlass and his cloth on the ground, but no sign of the man himself. They searched the bush, and called and shouted; but all in vain, for the toothless man was never again seen."

THE END.

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